

Invincible Saint ~ Salaryman,

– the Path I Walk to Survive in This Other World –

– Book 7 –

The Engineer Village

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CHAPTER 103

SUDDEN MAGIC TOOL IDEA

We reached a place that was slightly over a day's travel from the borders of the Saint Schull Allied Nations.

"Without the sensation of pulling a carriage, horses sure can run considerably fast."
(Luciel)

"It's the first time I've seen a carriage with this amount of gravity mitigation."
(Lionel?)

"Really? Nevertheless, we're only a day from the national borders but this has been the first time a year felt so long to me." (Luciel)

"That's how it goes when you're doing something you're not accustomed to. Well then, we're heading left along the wall after the pass the border right?" (Lionel?)

"Yeah. I made sure to confirm the location and Dolan and Paula said so as well so there's no doubt about it." (Luciel)

"It would be great if there are settlements like villages nearby though ..." (?)

"Well, even if there aren't any ... rather, ha~ there are a lot of monsters here as well."
(Lionel?)

In front of us were large monitor lizards and huge snakes that were obstructed the way forward and were intimidating each other but I could tell that they noticed us and were beginning to be wary of us.

"Maybe they came from the valley that spans to the left." (Lionel)

As Lionel calmly analysed beside me, I took out my holy dragon spear from my magic bag and readied myself.

"Well then, maybe I'll try fighting with a spear on horseback according to your lecture. I'm relying on you, Fornoir." (Luciel)

"I'll have the honour of being the vanguard this time as well." (Lionel)

A voice came from my side along with the figure of a cat beastwoman dashing out at considerable speed.

“I’m bored so I’ll be joining in nya.” (Cathy)

Lionel and I exchanged glances before we chased after Cathy and joined the battle.

Grasping onto the reins with my left hand, I change the grip on my spear to both my hands the instant I pass by a monster and firmly fix myself on top of the horse by sandwiching it with my knees.

Since Fornoir can read the opponent’s attacks, I solely concentrate on a single point of the monster and thrust with my spear.

Even if the timing is superb, as expected, it is still far more difficult compared to fighting on foot so I passed by the monsters without being able to defeat it.

And by the time I steered back around, Lionel and Cathy have already slaughtered them.

“Burururu.”

I stroked the slightly disheartened Fornoir to apologize before I returned to where the 2 stood.

“I understand because Cathy boasts of her speed but why is Lionel so fast too ...” (Luciel)

“Even like this, I was once a general as well. I began jousting from the age of 10 so I already have a career(experience) of more than 30 years.” (Lionel)

Instead of showing a bashful expression, Lionel gave a slightly smug look and began laughing.

“Lionel-sama has never made a blunder on horseback before nya.” (Cathy)

Cathy, with her quick movements, pierced the brain of multiple large monitor lizards with strikes at single concentrated points and was currently burying the monsters.

“I see ... and so, why did you jump off the carriage?” (Luciel)

“I was bored nya. I stayed on it the whole time for the first day so I got off to come and get permission nya.” (Cathy)

“ ... Or perhaps you were sick of the magic discussions?” (Luciel)

“ N, no that’s ... not wrong nya. They’ve been endlessly chanting some weird incantations nya. I’ll be defeated mentally if I stay there nya.” (Cathy)

“Then wouldn’t it be fine if you swap with Kefin to be the coachman?” (Luciel)

“Look at Kefin properly nya. Regardless of being the coachman, his eyes are looking off into the distance nya.” (Cathy)

Hearing that, I looked over to Kefin and his eyes were certainly gazing off into the distance.

“What about Dolan?” (Luciel)

“He’s pleased that his granddaughter made a friend so he’s completely become a good-natured old man nya.” (Cathy)

..... It’s true that it’s difficult to find a friend to talk about magic tools even if you try to look for one.

“I won’t change our pace you know?” (Luciel) *(TL: Cathy’s running on foot.)*

“No problem nya. If I’m tired, I’ll return to become the coachman or return to that devil’s cave.” (Cathy) *(TL: Her devils cave refers to the carriage)*

Cathy’s tension has gradually been dropping so I gave her permission to stay outside.

Around the time we spot the highway after running on horseback for about an hour, the canyon slowly faded away and a forest began to spread across our left.

“Monsters live in forests like these so we better stay vigilant.” (Luciel)

“Well, this is already part of the Saint Schull Allied Nations so there probably won’t be any strong monsters that appear.” (Lionel?)

“I’m troubled because that’s not absolute ...” (Luciel)

Monsters aren’t restricted to being above ground after all.

We occasionally encounter surprise attacks from the sky and there are monsters that appear from underground so I could not be at ease.

That’s when I had a thought.

If we have a monster detection device that can detect monsters, there wouldn’t be a need for such worries?

During our noon break, I asked the 3 of them if it can be built and they were shocked.

“So there’s such a method!” (Dolan or Rician)

“Genius of insight!” (Paula)

“If that can be done, people’s hope of living without fear of monsters may come true.”
(Rician or Dolan)

They 3 of them said so and plenty of terminologies began flying about, I was completely chased out as an outsider.

“ ... It won’t be strange if countries use that for military purposes one day.”

Lionel leaked out those words as he sighed.

“Even so, I think that it was conceived according to the need of the people nya.”

Cathy looked distantly into the future.

“We’ll prove that Luciel-sama made it for the sake of peace.”

Kefin said as he clenched his fist.

Lionel’s train of thought left me in the dust as I completely did not consider military use but this finally achieved a fresh restart. *(TL: Don’t know what restart the author’s talking about, restart Lionel’s militaristic thinking/nature? or start a new direction for their journey?)*

“However, I’ve surprised that Dolan can cook.”

When I murmured that, Dolan who was supposed to be having a magic tool discussion, was beside me without me realising and he told me the reason.

“I’ve put in a lot of effort to properly raise Paula.”

“I see ... because of that, Paula never learned how to cook and dream of becoming a magic tool engineer huh?”

“ I’m reflecting on it but I only slightly regret it.”

So he does regret it slightly.

“ ... It might be possible to develop a magic tool that can automatically cook vegetables that you put into it.” (Luciel)

“?! A genius of insight after all!” (Paula)

“I’ll definitely have to make that!” (Rician)

Since Rician can’t actually cook as well, the 2 of them were sold on the idea even more than the one before.

“Do you have any ideas on how to do it?”

“It’s alright even if it is something insignificant.”

“Eh? Hmm~ ... Maybe if it could execute the steps in a recipe in sequence after you put in the ingredients?

Also, it’s slightly different, but if the water content in the cooking could be extracted via high pressure after rapidly freezing it, we may be able to create something similar to emergency rations that can be reconstituted using hot water.

Even now when making dried meat, they are prevented from going bad using salt and spices and used for soups and such, but if that technology can be established then people might be able to eat tasty cooking just by adding hot water?” (Luciel)

I spoke according to the explanation for freeze dried food products I saw on the television during my previous life. I don’t know if it can be reproduced in this world but there’s no harm in trying so I suggested to the 2 of them.

“Monster detection device and food preservation ... a genius after all ... or perhaps ...” (Paula)

“Paula, in order to successfully make that, we have no choice but to combine our techniques.” (Rician)

“Okay. Even if a person can’t cook, they can cook just by adding hot water. That is the dream of mankind.” (Paula)

“The world will change.” (Rician)

As the 2 of them gestured with their hands, they exchanged a firm handshake and once again began their discussion of magic tools.

When I was freed from there, Lionel and the others had surprised looks on their faces.

“ ... What?”

They all seldom stared so intently at me so I tried asking.

“To use the miracle light at that young age, to come up with the idea for people to not get ambushed by monsters and to envision the magic tool to preserve food for a long period of time ...”

Unlike always, Lionel’s voice became softer as he neared the end of his sentence.

“I’ll also want to have them once either of them is completed nya.”

Cathy reacted like I had imagined so I inadvertently laughed.

“I’d like to hear if you have any ideas on weapons and armours.”

Dolan was hoping for any interesting ideas for blacksmithing.

“ ”

Finally, only Kefin was left staring at me with a fervent look.

Is it that? ... When Kefin and the others failed in their attack on the Healer’s Guild, the magic bra and magic underwear that gave greater effect in a set that were peeled off by Dolan and Paula and passed to me?

“Sorry but I don’t swing that way.” (Luciel)

“Hah?” (Kefin)

He replied with a straight face so it doesn’t seem to be because of that.

“ ... Why were you staring at me like that?” (Luciel)

“Eh ... no, it’s because I realised that I’ve achieved one of my goals.” (Kefin)

... Goals huh.

I was having chills up my spine so I’m glad I was wrong.

“That’s good if that’s the case. Work hard.” (Luciel)

“Yes.” (Kefin)

Kefin nodded happily.

Thus, after we ended our noon break by exchanging such idle chats, we once again resumed our journey to the city of Rockford where engineers gather.

CHAPTER 104

EARTHQUAKE, MONSTERS, AND UNEASY FEELING

Nothing happened for 2 days after we began travelling on the highway, no particularly strong monsters appeared and we proceeded smoothly.

Then, it happened when we had our guard down at dusk.

『Gogogogogogo』 *(TL: SFX for rumbling noises)*

At first, I thought I was mistaken but the earth gradually began to shake.

“Is it an earthquake?”

The shaking subsided immediately after I had lowered my body to balance myself ... but the earthquake caused one serious problem.

He was beside the fire so I happened to look at him but Dolan was acting strangely.

“Dolan, are you alright?”

I asked Dolan but he was ashen faced and sweating profusely.

“I, I’m alright.”

Even though he said that, Dolan’s eyes were vacant.

After I approached Dolan and applied 「Recover」, his eyes gradually regained their focus and it felt like his state of turmoil subsided.

“ ... Perhaps the earthquake reminded you of the time you lost your arms?”

“ ... As expected of the S-rank healer-sama Luciel-sama to see through me ... that’s right. I’ve wondered countless times if only the earthquake didn’t happen then.

If that didn’t happen, then I wouldn’t have lost my arms and the workshop wouldn’t have been blown away.”

I wondered if Dolan was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

“I see. However, you protected Paula in exchange for those arms right?”

“ ... Right. That’s right. Furthermore, my arms are perfectly fine now ...”

Dolan was agitated but he forcibly smiled and clenched and relaxed his grip before he regained his composure.

“Dolan, I do not understand your feelings.

But I can apply healing magic on you and you can consult me. It might become easier if you talk about it.

If you feel even the slightest bit unwell, please come to speak to me.”

“ ... I guess my luck is somehow very good.”

Dolan looked at me and smiled.

Paula looked at Dolan who mostly regained his composure and showed a relieved expression.

I didn’t think that it was fortunate but I’m glad that Paula didn’t show any symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Dolan, I’m quite certain that earthquakes happen quite frequently in Rockford since a couple of years ago? Should we change our course to Meratoni?”

It’s not like ... we must go to Rockford.

Actually, I remembered that there’s a dragon there as well so I don’t really want to go there too ...

However, Dolan is not the type of person who complains.

“It’s alright. I have the mission to create that and I want to tell their graves that I’ve once again become a blacksmith.”

Dolan showed me his usual expression.

“Alright if that’s the case. Well then, I’ll quickly prepare dinner.” (Luciel)

“It looks like we’ll need to do some monster extermination before that.” (Lionel)

“Nya?! This time, it’s from underground nya. The monsters are some ant-like monsters nya.”

“Enter, Fornoir.”

She immediately entered after I turned the Key of the Hermit and ordered her to enter the stables.

“I’ll let you out once the combat is over.”

After saying that, I turned the key and the door disappeared.

“How many are they?” (Luciel)

“About 20 to 30 nya.” (Cathy)

“Ants have strong vitality and attack using bites or fluid that can solidify so evade them.” (Dolan)

Dolan’s voice echoed after Cathy’s voice.

“Are you alright without resting?”

“I’ll precisely strike and crush them and get my hands on earth attribute magic stones.”

Dolan had returned to his usual self.

“That’s reassuring. Even if you lose your arms, as long as you don’t lose your life, I will save you. So send them flying!”

“Yeah!”

Dolan readied his great hammer.

Beside him was a 3 meter-class golem in a fighting pose attacking the ants.

The ant monsters were ... weak.

“Their weak but aren’t their numbers progressively increasing?”

I occasionally forget that the equipment I’m holding have cheat-like performance but the magic-channelled Holy Dragon Spear and Illusionary Sword are both able to split the hard back of the ants in two.

“They’re gradually increasing huh.”

“They’re quite tough nya.”

“If that’s the case, let us finish this in one go, Paula.”

“Got it grandpa.”

The 3 meter-class golem became 5 meter-class and crushed the ants by stepping on them using the sole of its feet.

That’s completely a stomping attack.

The kick attack was a plain toe kick as well ... Should I use that as inspiration to construct that? Or maybe the day that I ask them about it is coming. *(TL: No idea what’s he talking about. My guess is Luciel wants Dolan to make a Gundam lol)*

The combat ended as I was deep in thought.

“That’s probably too strong if it can be used indefinitely.”

“It’s certainly true that if the mechanism is unknown, it doesn’t feel like you can win nya.”

“It looks like a good simulation for anti-giant combat.”

I know that Lionel is a battle maniac so I ignored Lionel’s words.

“It’s dark so we’ll strip the ants tomorrow. However, please remain vigilant and check if they are properly dead.”

After I took out torches from my magic bag and passed it to them, I stored the carcasses in my magic bag and cast purification magic.

“There’re at least 50 ant monsters but is it usual for this area to have so many monsters?” (Luciel)

“The number of monsters increases when the earthquake becomes more active but to be honest, I don’t know much about what’s going on lately.” (Dolan)

“ ... There aren’t any labyrinths in the area around Rockford right?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. There are several mines scattered about but there aren’t any that have become labyrinths.” (Dolan)

So there’s a possibility that they may become a labyrinth if we’re unlucky?

Or perhaps ...

“Is it possible that the mines themselves are labyrinths?” (Luciel)

“The monster bodies remain so they shouldn’t be labyrinths.” (Dolan)

Dolan said.

“Today we’ll camp in three shifts.”

After announcing that, I lighted the monster repelling incense I purchased from the Herbalist Guild.

However, I didn’t know how effective it was outdoors so I had us do 3 shifts.

Monsters did not attack until dawn but the ants from yesterday came from underground so there were 50cm-sized holes on the ground.

“They look exactly like pitfalls. Don’t you think that carriages will fall into it if their wheels get stuck?” (Luciel)

“That’s true. Considering how many ant monsters there were, it might be better if we slightly reduce our speed.” (Kefin or Lionel?)

“It’s been going smoothly until now but I guess we should do that.” (Luciel)

While feeling relieved that there are no ant monsters in Ienith, I took out the carriage from my magic bag.

We’ll arrive in another 3 or 4 days so we once again departed for Rockford.

“Yesterday the ant monsters did not fly or spit fluids and they were weak as monsters ... do you think they were scout types?” (Luciel)

“I’m not that well-versed in the study of monsters but while monsters have the common variants, there are those with stronger bodies and mutants as well as upper-class monsters so that line of thought might be reasonable.” (Lionel)

“I wonder if there is a peaceful large country somewhere.” (Luciel)

“If it’s the Independent Magic City Nelldal where the Magician Guild’s headquarter is, they apparently get attacked by bizarre bird-type monsters like wyverns and griffons but there are mechanisms to prevent them from entering so it is comparatively safe.” (Lionel)

“I can’t really have a peace of mind with the mention of bizarre bird-type monsters like wyverns and griffons but do they have some barrier set up? And why is it only flying monsters?” (Luciel)

“The Independent Magic City Nelldal is a magical city that floats in the air made hundreds of years ago from the combined effort of the hero, philosopher, and spirit magician. I heard that it is not governed by any country and signed non-aggression pacts with multiple countries.” (Lionel)

“ ... I didn’t expect there to be pioneers ... or rather, there wasn’t any literature about a flying city in the books that I read when I was studying though?” (Luciel)

“That’s because of that right. There are various kinds of constraints regarding Nelldal and since it moves in the air, we don’t even know its current location.” (Lionel)

It couldn’t be drawn onto maps so they did not write about it huh, isn’t that slightly high-handed ...

“ ... Sure sounds good~. Floating city.” (Luciel)

“It’s unrelated to battle so I don’t really like it but now that I think about it, they are at odds with the Healer’s Guild.” (Lionel)

“ ... Why?” (Luciel)

“If my memory serves me right, it’s due to conflicts because the gods they have faith in are different.” (Lionel)

I knew it anyway.

Life is not so simple ...

“So it’s more realistic to create the monster radar as soon as possible huh?” (Luciel)

“We’ll protect you if monsters come so there’s no need to fuss about that so much.” (Lionel)

“ ... I hope so, thank you.” (Luciel)

It was when we were having that conversation.

When I thought that the horses pulling the carriage were beginning to be agitated, another earthquake happened.

“Ku ... Okay, you’re great, Fornoir.”

Even when the earthquake happened, Fornoir didn’t move in the slightest.

Lionel properly controlled his horse so it calmed down.

The earthquake stopped after 30 seconds but I judged that it would be bad to let the agitated horses pull the carriage so I ushered them into the hermit’s stable for them to relax.

“You look better compared to yesterday ... 「Recover」 .” (Luciel)

“Thanks. This time, I confirmed that I have my hands countless times so I wasn’t in such a disarray but my body was still trembling.” (Dolan)

“That probably can’t be helped.” (Luciel)

Dolan’s complexion was bad but it wasn’t as bad as yesterday and his eyes were properly focused.

He seemed somewhat relieved after I applied 「Recover」 on him.

With Dolan’s tenacious spirit, he’ll definitely overcome it so I look forward to it.

Then, Cathy’s voice rang out.

“Same monsters as yesterday are coming again nya.” (Cathy)

“Don’t push yourself.” (Luciel)

“I’d like to see Paula’s delighted expression with magic stones.” (Dolan)

Dolan is still Dolan after all.

Same ant monsters as yesterday suddenly appeared from holes and surged out.

I applied 「Area Barrier」 and we simultaneously ran toward the ants.

“It’s amazing when you properly look at them.”

The surging ant monsters swarmed as they approached but since we could defeat them with a single attack, even I was fine as long as I wasn’t surrounded.

Lionel swung his flaming greatsword as he beat, burned and blew away the ants with amazing vigour.

Thanks to that, although we did not have any cooperation or could not be careless, it didn’t feel like a tough battle.

As we continued to defeat them, I saw an ant with wings spread out come out of the hole but its wings were cut off with flying wind blades and it fell down.

Rician must have been using spirit magic.

“I wasn’t of any use yesterday so I’ll work for my share today.”

She locked eyes with me and said as she once again sent out wind blades to attack another ant monster.

The battle did not last for that long but I was concerned about the greater number of monsters compared to yesterday and the appearance of the upper-class monster as well.

“Are the earthquakes precursors to the appearance of monsters?”

“ ... It might be safer to assume so.”

“Do you think Rockford is safe?”

“The earthquakes happen frequently but including from underground, there haven’t been any monsters that have entered the city.”

“That’s great if that’s true.”

As I collected the ant carcasses, I prayed that nothing happened to Rockford.

Thus, we received attacks from the ant monsters a couple of times but at noon on the fourth day, we finally arrived at the city of Rockford where craftsmen and engineers gather.

CHAPTER 105

THE HOMETOWN OF RESEARCHERS AND ENGINEERS

The town said to be the gathering place for researchers and engineers gave me the feeling of a cosy place.

Instead of a city, it certainly gave a stronger impression as a town so, on a whole, it was small in size.

Rockford was the final stop on the highway.

I found that the town was built on a wide empty land surrounded by mountains.

“It’s called Rockford so I imagined a more rocky place but it’s surprisingly normal.”

We’ve arrived at the town so I housed Fornoir and the horses in the Hermit’s stable and stored the carriage in my magic bag before slowly surveying the cityscape.

The dwellings felt like they were built with bricks and concrete and there were no buildings made of wood.

In addition, contrary to the place where engineers and researchers gather, there weren’t any visible large workshops that leave such an impression.

“That’s because this town is a dummy. I believe you have not seen anybody around right?”

Dolan mentioned so I once again looked around the town of Rockford and it certainly was a ghost town without anybody living in it.

“This way.”

Paula looked like she was feeling nostalgic and was walking ahead.

“Watch out?! Ha?”

Paula looked like she was going to slam into a wall as she was looking over here so I inadvertently called out but Paula ... didn't slam into the wall and her body was swallowed into the wall instead.

"Illusion?" (Luciel)

"That's right. It's the effect of a magic tool created to hide the people from foreign enemies by expertly using the refraction of light. This place is full of oddballs but there are also many who are chased by various entities ..." (Dolan)

"It's amazing nya." (Cathy)

"It's a glimpse of the technology that was the reason why the Empire failed their attempted attack on this place." (Lionel)

"Gahaha. This is just the beginning." (Dolan)

Under the guidance of the abnormally high-tensioned Dolan due to the praises to his own town, we also stepped into the wall.

It was a pretty amazing otherworld version of projection mapping that could display a fake wall despite it being daytime now.

"Wouldn't one be able to do anything with such technological capabilities?"

Nobody heard my murmurings.

What awaited us after we were swallowed by the wall were ... golems.

"I'd like to be spared from being forced to fight with these though..." (Luciel)

"A new golem would rise at the same time you destroy one so it's a waste of time." (Dolan)

Paula was waiting for us in front of a golem.

"Hurry." (Paula)

With her delighted expression, Paula looked like a child proud of her own home.

"Paula, it's the first time we're here?"

Rician chided her as we continued to walk forward. The golem began to move and spoke.

【Answer the riddle if you wish to pass through here】

Seems like we could pass if we answer the question.

I was looking forward to it slightly.

【Name the technique where one circle and clutch their arms around the waist of their opponent from behind, throw them backward, and form a bridge while maintaining the clutch on their opponent.】

Huh?

“German Suplex.” (Paula)

【The road shall open】

“ ... What’s with that question just now?” (Luciel)

“The founder who made this made it such that the questions come from the selected genre but there are a lot of strange genres. Furthermore, if you try to forcibly pass through, the golems would attack.” (Dolan)

“ ... Then just now?” (Luciel)

“Most likely a question on the techniques from professional wrestling. Paula played with the golems a lot so before I knew it, she had memorised them.” (Dolan)

There are professional wrestling techniques in this world? In the first place, I didn’t learn any professional wrestling techniques when I was studying Taijutsu under Instructor Broad.

“Incidentally, what happens when you’re wrong?” (Luciel)

“Nothing in particular.” (Dolan)

“Nothing?” (Luciel)

“You’ll understand when we continue on ahead.” (Dolan)

“ ... Incidentally, what are the other questions?” (Luciel)

“There are scientific questions like the temperature for water to vaporise or the definition of water vapor explosion. There are also questions like the kind of ores attainable from the mines or extremely difficult calculation questions appear if you choose mathematics.” (Dolan)

“ ... Who was the founder of this place?” (Luciel)

“It ought to be Sir Rainstar. Apparently, he stayed here for a couple of years and developed various things.

I heard he gathered engineers and researchers who could not resist trying to figure out what they can do with their own techniques.

Rockford was built by those people holding various kinds of techniques.

This place being called the hometown of researchers and engineers only happened after then.” (Dolan)

“ ... It sounds outrageous, in many ways.” (Luciel)

“If you ask me, I think Luciel-sama is similar too. Since you’re still so young, I have a premonition that you will become a heavyweight that surpasses Sir Rainstar.” (Dolan)

Dolan walked on ahead as he said so and laughed.

“ ... I should make a magic tool that somehow manages to transform me into another person.” (Luciel)

I made a new resolution and chased after the backs of everyone.

After passing the golems, there was a large door with a small door on its right.

Paula ignored them and walked toward the right side wall instead of the doors in front. The moment she placed her hand on the wall, the wall emitted a pale light and split open.

“This is?” (Luciel)

“Magical power authentication. If you do not register your magical power in advance, it will cost you considerable effort to enter.” (Dolan)

... I’m shocked by the gimmicks we’ve encountered until now, but then how did Dolan become a slave?

“Dolan, how did you become a slave? Where did you encounter the slave traders in the first place?” (Luciel)

“ ... The request was from the king of the dwarf race of the underground kingdom ... I’d prefer if you do not ask any more than that if possible.” (Dolan)

“Okay. Rather, so there’s an underground kingdom where dwarves live huh?” (Luciel)

“The elves have their country so it’s said that, not to be outdone, the dwarves also built a kingdom underground.” (Dolan)

“I see. Shall we go?” (Luciel)

We entered through the wall that Paula opened before it shut.

After advancing forward, a town ... a city precisely split into districts spread out ahead.

“So other than workshops, there are fields and pastures as well. Moreover, there’s even a sun ...” (Luciel)

“The people who live here are almost all engineers or researchers who own workshops.

However, since they are living, they naturally get hungry too.

There are different approaches like purchasing slaves for the sake of managing the fields and pastures or having their own disciples manage them.” (Dolan)

“Even so, I’m surprised the food can suffice.” (Luciel)

“That’s because the Adventurer’s Guild transport monster meat over once a week and it’s possible to borrow food during emergencies.

We don’t just always remain in this town, if we go out to search for disciples, we also partake on some requests. That’s why it doesn’t feel like it’s inconvenient for living.” (Dolan)

“Home is where the heart is huh.” (Luciel)

“First of all, I’ll have to serve as an apprentice under someone in order to construct my workshop.” (Dolan)

Dolan smiled weakly but it seems like he has a goal in mind.

Also, unlike the fake town, although seldom, we still passed by people and they called out when they noticed Dolan and Paula.

“Isn’t that Dolan!”

“Paula-chan is here as well.”

“He, hey Dolan has his arms.”

“Perhaps Dolan is going to smith again?”

Those voices asked but Dolan ignored all of them.

No, rather, he was stunned after he saw the man standing ahead.

“Elder brother Grand.” (Dolan)

“Long time no see, Dolan. Also, you may have been a junior disciple once but I’m younger so please stop calling me elder brother.” (Grand) *(TL: They were both disciples under the same master)*

Paula was hugging onto Grand-san and crying.

Although he completely treated all the surrounding people as air, Grand-san separated himself from Paula and slowly approached me before bowing down.

“Luciel-dono, thank you for saving Dolan and Paula.” (Grand)

“Please raise your head. It’s really just a coincidence that I found Dolan and Paula.

They became my slaves solely because Dolan looked like he has the capability so it’s really just by chance.

Furthermore, I want to believe that it could help me repay Grand-san slightly for gifting me the Illusionary Cane.” (Luciel)

After I said so, Grand-san patted my shoulder and smiled.

“I’m glad I really worked hard that time.” (Grand)

“I agree. Well then, could you give us a tour?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. Everyone, please follow me.” (Grand)

We followed after Grand-san.

A look of distress slowly surfaced on Dolan’s face and Paula’s gait gradually became heavier.

However, after they saw that, they both bolted ahead.

“Is it exactly the same as before?” (Dolan)

“No, the rooms increased for that lady elf there so it’s wider than before. Well, I did reproduce the shape and the location.” (Grand)

“I will pay for the cost.” (Dolan)

“No, please allow me to shoulder this. Since Dolan became a slave because you were forced to do the impossible when I wasn’t around.” (Grand)

... The Dwarf Kingdom huh.

I’m interested but I shouldn’t thrust my head in too deep.

“ ... Then let’s split it equally. Since I plan to have Dolan and others create various things from now on.” (Luciel)

“ ... It somehow sounds interesting.” (Grand)

“Please ask Dolan about it. How much is it?” (Luciel)

“It’s 8 white gold coins but do you have enough?” (Grand)

“I’ve earned quite a sum even though I’m like this. Moreover, I pretty much only used the gold for food.” (Luciel)

As I said so and smiled, I took out 8 white gold coins from my magic bag and passed them to Grand-san.

“ ... I wasn’t wrong to think that your concept of money is warped.” (Grand)

“Yeah. Oh right. Could I request of you to do some weapon maintenance?” (Luciel)

“Sure. Leave it to me.” (Grand)

Thus, we headed toward Dolan and Paula’s workshops.

At that time, I was unaware that Lionel and Cathy hardened their determination for a certain matter.

CHAPTER 106

THE BANQUET AFTER RETURNING

Paula entered the workshop.

Dolan didn't enter ... without entering, he touched the workshop, touched the entrance, and sat down on the spot.

"What's wrong, Dolan?" (Luciel)

"What exactly should I do to repay Luciel-sama and elder brother Grand?" (Dolan)

Something glimmered in Dolan's eyes.

Seems like the surprise was a great success.

Grand-san smiled delightedly as he looked at Dolan.

"From today on, I'll propose plenty of ideas for things I want to be made so please help me actualize each and every one of them." (Luciel)

"I've been working with that intention all along. However, this is too much of a foul play." (Dolan)

Dolan could no longer hide his tears.

"Luciel-dono informed me that Dolan was alive and well. I knew that someday you would return. It's natural to put in the effort for my fellow junior disciple." (Grand)

"Elder brother Grand!"

The 2 of them gave each other solid hugs.

I missed the chance to speak under the heavy atmosphere but Grand-san noticed it.

After making sure, I spoke to Dolan.

"Look, if you don't do in, Rician can't go in too. She'll be staying here from today onward after all."

I looked over at Rician and she was looking uncomfortable.

“Sorry. Come along then.” (Dolan)

Thus, we intruded? on Dolan and the other’s home and workshop.

The second floor was built as their living space while there were 3 workshops constructed in the basement.

“The above ground building looked normal but this basement ... I don’t understand.”

The reason why I muttered so was not only because of the size of the workshop.

The size was about 2 times that of the workshop in Lenith, but it was made of semi-transparent glass-like materials that allowed one to guess what is inside and the glass was engraved with numerous magic circles.

“Engraved with sound-proof, vibration-proof, dust-proof, antiseptic and fire-proof magic circles, the walls were made from diamond and Adamantite to allow one to see what’s inside in the unlikely event of an emergency. With this, there will no longer be a chance that the workshop gets blown up.” (Grand)

Just by looking, I could tell that it cost an amazing amount of gold so I was convinced.

“This place won’t shake even if an earthquake comes. Because we’ve completely immobilized the ground underneath.” (Grand)

Grand-san’s motivations were overflowing.

However, he implied that the mistake that caused Dolan’s workshop to explode was influenced by the earthquake after all.

Paula and Rician both had booths that allowed them to peek at each other so they exchanged eye contact that showed their rivalry as well as their feelings of pouring everything they have into joint development.

Then, Lionel and Cathy who have been keeping silent since we arrived at Rockford spoke.

“Luciel-sama, I wish to request for the master on the apex of the blacksmithing world, Grand-dono, and Dolan-dono to construct armor jointly but ...” (Lionel)

“We understand that it is an impertinent request as slaves nya but we still wish to ask you nya.” (Cathy)

Was Grand-san famous even in the Empire?

As expected~, while thinking so, I accepted their request.

“I’m willing to dispel your slave contracts anytime so the 2 of you can be considered as slave (provisional) ... Grand-san. I’d like to request of you to create armor for the 3 slaves here, is it alright?” (Luciel)

“Even for me as well?” (Kefin)

“You plan to serve as my strength right?” (Luciel)

Kefin was flustered but it’s better to increase our combat strength if we have the choice.

“I agree since it is Luciel-dono’s request. However, I won’t be giving you a discount okay. Also, it’s time to maintain Luciel-dono’s armor as well.” (Grand)

“Thank you. I’m willing to pay as long as it is within my means.” (Luciel)

“Understood. Dolan, you think you can do it?” (Grand)

“I’ll strike my heart and soul into it!! I accept this request. Elder brother Grand, please lend me your strength.” (Dolan)

“Leave it to me.” (Grand)

Thus, it looked like they were going to begin crafting the armor immediately ... but, Grand-san’s next words caused the place to go silent.

“So then, what materials should we craft them with? Monster materials? Or with Mithril, Adamantite or Orichalcum?” (Grand)

“Do you have them in stock?” (Luciel)

“What are you talking about? You brought it with you right?” (Grand)

“ ” (Luciel)

What does he mean?

He directed his gaze at me but looks like we'll have to go to the mines.

... Even though we finally arrived at a safe land with a small party ... I could not fire up my motivation to risk my life for the sake of fabricating armor.

As if they perceived my thoughts, 『Gashi Gashi』, Lionel and Cathy grabbed my shoulders.

“Luciel-sama, I won't ask for any more selfish requests, so shall we go to the mines?”
(Lionel)

“Luciel-sama, I'll devote myself to serving you so please nya.” (Cathy)

“Yup, no way.” (Luciel)

I turned them down with a smile.

Who would want to go to a mine where some earth dragon or land dragon sleeps!

“... Is it alright to make the equipment for the 3 of them with the purified dragon scales and bones I passed to you previously to make the illusionary cane?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. Of course. That's also quite an amazing material so I'll have to show my skill.”
(Grand)

“I just don't want to go to the mine. It will definitely take quite some time right?”
(Luciel)

“If it's for the 3 of them ... it will take at least 3 months. At most half a year.” (Grand)

The 3 of them were surprised to hear about the material but it was gathering dust in my magic bag either way so it was more meaningful to use them to save some time and effort.

Moreover, it reduced the risk to our lives.

The armor was for the 3 of them so I had predicted the time required and it wasn't a problem to me.

“Alright. I plan to visit the town of Meratoni once my armor maintenance and their measurements for their armors are done but would it be alright?” (Luciel)

I can get some training done in half a year after all, and I hope for some wonderful encounters instead of brutal encounters.

“Yeah. No problem. Rather than that, today is the welcoming party for Dolan and Paula so I’ll have you accompany me to drink today Luciel-dono.” (Grand)

“Sure. I don’t have any strong liquor but I have some specially made mead so I’d like it if you have a taste.” (Luciel)

“It’s fine as long as it has alcohol. All the better if it tastes good. Strong alcoholic drinks are good but I also welcome liquor that I rarely get to drink.” (Grand)

“I’m glad that’s the case. Also, would it be alright to dispel Dolan and Paula’s slave contracts during the event?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. Of course.” (Grand)

“Please wait a moment, if the dwarf king finds out ...” (Dolan)

“Don’t worry. I’ve already had an audience with the dwarf king regarding this matter. You no longer have to worry about it.

Either way, the dwarf king regrets his decision in the first place.

To allow your promise that he can descend you into a slave or whatnot if you can’t present the strongest sword to him.” (Grand)

“A promise is a promise ... I did not think that Paula would get caught up in it too.” (Dolan)

“Stop giving strange promises that will cause you regret in the future.” (Grand)

“Elder brother ... I'll bear that in mind from now on and I plan to create the ideas that Luciel-sama comes up with.” (Dolan)

“Tsk, showing off such a delighted expression. You'll make me want to jump on board as well.” (Grand)

“So I'll dispel it tonight?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. Thank you.” (Dolan)

Dolan lowered his head to me.

During dusk that is reproduced in the town of Rockford, for the sake of celebrating the return of Dolan and Paula, the researchers and engineers who finished their work gathered at the town square.

“Gentlemen, thank you for gathering here.

This town's Strong Arm Engineer Dolan and the golem-loving girl Paula have returned.” (Grand)

The people cheered and various words were tossed to the 2 people.

“The 2 of them are currently slaves ... but I will now dispel their slave contracts.” (Luciel)

I applied 「Dispel」 on the 2 of them.

“With this, the dispelling of the slave contract is complete.” (Luciel)

I told Grand-san and Grand-san gave a large nod.

“The person who had just dispelled their slave contracts is Luciel-dono, the S-rank healer from Saint Schull’s church. He had humanely purchased the 2 of them and protected them.” (Grand)

The inhabitants were at a loss at what reaction they should give after hearing him say the 2 of them were purchased and protected.

“He was a gentle lord that never once beaten or used us. Also, never once reached his hand toward Paula ... worthless.” (Dolan)

『Gan!』 With a soft drum, Paula whacked Dolan’s head as if it was a stand-up comedy tsukkomi.

I smiled when I saw that while the inhabitants roared with laughter.

Looks like their sketch comedy started since long ago.

“I’ve returned. Please take care of me.” (Paula)

Everyone sent cheers over reminiscent of those sent toward idols as Paula cutely bowed to me.

『Paula-chaaann~』

She grew up here since young.

And as an Engineer, Paula must have been raised with love by everyone.

“Everyone in the crowd, I’ve caused you all a lot of troubles. I’ll be in your care from today onward as well.” (Paula)

This time, they replied with a warm applause.

“Today is a good day as well. With Luciel-dono around, I won’t be surprised if we drink too much and get a hangover for 2 days!”

『Oooohh~!』

“To celebrate Dolan and Paula’s return, cheers!”

『Cheers!』

Thus, the banquet began.

“I lamented when I heard that Dolan and Paula became slaves.

Which was why ... I complained to the dwarf king and the gods.

The dwarf king was feeling considerably depressed.

Why didn’t you ask for my help?” (Grand)

As Grand-san and Dolan ... -san began drinking, Grand-san began preaching. *(TL: He’s not used to addressing Dolan with -san)*

“My bad.” (Dolan)

“I tried to look for clues to the whereabouts of you 2 ... but in the end, time passed but I couldn’t find you.

At that time, a letter arrived from the Healer’s church S-rank healer Luciel-dono here.

He mentioned that he had secured the 2 of you, regenerated Dolan’s arms and requested me to construct a place that you 2 can return to.

Do you understand how happy I was?” (Grand)

“Thank you, Uncle Grand.” (Paula)

“Mm. Paula didn’t do anything wrong after all.” (Grand)

Grand-san who had completely become a good-natured old man was patting Paula as he continued his preaching toward Dolan.

“Luciel-dono mentioned that I shouldn’t reveal it to anyone else so even I was wounded by the strange look everyone gave me when I was reconstructing the workshop.” (Grand)

Grand-san who should be quite capable of holding his liquor suddenly tipped his head back to drink and the spilled alcohol almost reached me.

“Elder brother Grand, thank you.” (Dolan)

Dolan ... -san faced Grand-san and thanked him by lowering his head.

“Damn it! Don’t say it anymore. But, I’ll have you accompany me to the very end today.” (Grand)

“I believe Elder brother Grand will be the first to collapse so leave it to me to look after you.” (Dolan)

“Bring it on, I’ll make you collapse.” (Grand)

Thus, the 2 of them began their drinking game and Dolan-san and Paula’s welcoming banquet continued deep into the night.

CHAPTER 107

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

The next morning, Grand-san and Dolan-san had a terrible hangover.

According to Paula, dwarves enjoy liquor with high alcoholic content that humans find hard to drink and they certainly are heavy drinkers but it doesn't look like their race is spared from having hangovers.

"They should accept their punishments for over drinking."

Paula declared and returned to her own workshop.

"Luciel-dono, show mercy, please cast status recovery magic." (Grand)

"Luciel-sama, there's some truth in Paula's words but please." (Dolan)

The 2 old man crawling on the floor with poor complexions like they were about to die was certainly pitiful so I complied with 「Recover」.

"Oh man~ We drank way too much." (Grand)

"I thought of getting a morning drink to get rid of the hangover but physically ... I would have to go through something terrible if I mixed it poorly." (Dolan)

The 2 of them returned to how they normally were after I applied recovery magic on them.

"By the way, I don't really like hearing you call me Dolan-san so it's fine if you just call me Dolan as usual. Our age difference doesn't matter so please leave behind the honorifics." (Dolan)

"... Then, you can call me Luciel as well." (Luciel)

"Muu, I'll try." (Dolan)

"Come to think of it, Grand-san, Toretto-san isn't with you?" (Luciel)

“Yeah. He seemed to have gotten into a slump lately and before he disappeared he mentioned that he was going to a place that might give him a lot of inspiration.” (Grand)

“So he also experiences slumps as well.” (Luciel)

“Rather than calling it a slump, it’s more like delusions ... oh well. Well then, we’ll start measuring the 3 of them so you can call them over.” (Grand)

“Yeah. The 2 of them ... are most likely looking forward to their new armor.” (Luciel)

“I see. We’ll be starting then Dolan.” (Grand)

“Yes, Elder brother Grand.” (Dolan)

After that, the 2 of them showed serious expressions that gave off the vibes of first-rate blacksmiths and even Lionel seemed overwhelmed by their power.

I had nothing to do so I thought of touring around Rockford.

“It’s dangerous so I’ll tag along.” (Paula)

Paula stopped me saying that it would be dangerous alone.

“I also wish to come along.” (Rician)

Then, Rician raised her hand and conveyed that she also wanted to come along.

Well, she’s now a resident of this place so it’s better if she comes along.

I thought so and agreed to their company.

Incidentally, I’ve already dispelled her slave contract.

“The 3 of us will go together then. But, what’s the danger?” (Luciel)

“There are various gimmicks set up. Furthermore, your magical power have not been authorized yet.” (Paula)

“Oh. Those things we passed through yesterday huh ... well then Paula, I’ll leave it to you to guide us.” (Luciel)

“I’ll entrust it to you.” (Rician)

“Sure.” (Paula)

After leaving a message at Dolan's workshop, we left Dolan's house.

The streets were a mix of beautiful cobbled stones and bare ground, they did not lay cobble stones on top of where there were underground workshops.

In the vicinity of the workshops, sounds like the hitting of iron and the grinding of metal could be heard and there were a large number of places with smoke plumes rising up.

Looking up into the sky, I saw the pseudo-sun made by Sir Rainstar floating in the sky and pondered.

"Is the pseudo-sun floating up in the sky similar to the one made by Paula?"

"The one here is exactly the same as outside, it rises in the morning and sinks in the evening. It always maintains the same temperature and humidity."

"... If that's the case, then it's as if the whole Rockford is covered by a huge magical tool?"

"Yeah. Furthermore, it absorbs magic in the air so it can continue operating semi-permanently."

"It's as if the inside of a labyrinth."

"He most likely used a similar technique."

"....."

I had a slightly bad feeling when I heard that.

Did Sir Rainstar intercept a place that was going to become a labyrinth with the help of the spirits?

Which is why instead of a labyrinth, there are rumors that the dragon sleeps within the mine ... I could not help but think of that possibility.

A ranch was spread out across the back and there was a small plantation there as well.

What caught my eye was the abundance of wells.

I don't understand why so many wells were dug but Rician asked Paula something then.

"This town feels so unbalanced. Workshops and this ranch do not feel like they belong in the same town." (Rician)

"I've heard that it's the hometown of Sir Rainstar." (Paula)

"So he was formerly a farmer?" (Luciel)

"Yeah. But various things happened and he lost it." (Paula)

I see.

None of that was written in the book that I read.

"Is that so." (Rician)

Rician had a slightly dark look after she heard that.

"It's good that there are peaceful locations as well. That's right. I thought we were going to get our magical powers authorized?" (Luciel)

"We can register it in the town hall at the center of the town." (Paula)

... So there are government offices in this world as well huh.

I had that thought in my mind as we headed toward the town hall.

Then, we reached the reception desk but the receptionist wasn't human.

To define it further, it wasn't even a life form.

To define it even further, it was something like an ATM at a bank.

"All you have to do is stand there and answer the voice that comes out. You'll be sent to the entrance of the town if you lie."

"... Is that similar to the magic circles in labyrinths?"

"Yeah."

Was Sir Rainstar a physicist? Or could he even use space-time magic?

Either way, he's too amazing ...

“Is Paula able to develop teleporting technology as well?”

“... I should be able to establish the theory and technology right before I die. However, I don't have the magic stones needed to make that.”

“The attribute as usual ... is it not possible to ignore that?”

“I've never seen space-time magic stones. I can't begin thinking about what I should do for something that I've never seen before. And the people who hold space-time attribute are only those who have exceeded the space-time.”

Paula rapidly talked with a sorrowful expression ... so the people who can acquire space-time attribute are only the reincarnated individuals or those associated with them?

I feel sorry for Paula but I set my mind to not acquire it.

【Please state your full name.】

【I will measure your magical power pattern.】

【Please state your profession.】

It's full of harmless questions.

However, the last question was a huge problem.

【Are you a reincarnated individual, transferred individual or possessed individual?】 *(TL: Basically the 3 usual ways for an otherworld novel, reincarnated as a baby, teleported into the world or mentally transferred into another person)*

Paula and Rician were behind me.

If I answer no, the fact that I'm a reincarnated individual will certainly be exposed.

Seriously what a souvenir to leave behind!!

I answered using my last resort.

“Ja” *(TL: He said yes in German.)*

It seemed like it could hear my answer even though I answered differently in German so I somehow weathered through the situation.

【Registration has been completed.】

I was relieved when I heard that voice.

I was just about to praise myself for coming up with the solution by answering in German to safely ride out the situation but the next instant, my consciousness receded.

When I came to, there was a young man in front of me.

“Here is?”

I was seated on a sofa and the young man was also seated on a sofa with a table in between us.

“This is something like an astral space I created.”

He deliberately drew his finger and a black tea set appeared.

“I mimicked a butler for numerous years so I’m familiar with making tea.”

The young man said with a smile.

I already understood who that young man was.

“You’re Sir Rainstar Gustard right.”

“Yeah. You’re ... Luciel-kun right. You’re the 5th visitor I’ve met.”

The young man ... Sir Rainstar is a handsome man who wears a gentle smile.

In addition to the abilities mentioned in his biography, his ability to create a space like this is likely to be the reason why the world could not leave him alone.

Why was I brought here? Rather than that, I’m more curious about the other 4 visitors.

“Luciel-kun, are you a reincarnated individual?”

“Yeah. I received a 15-year-old body and was reincarnated into Galdardia.”

“I see. I’m Japanese and a sinkhole suddenly appeared when I was going home after work and before I knew it, I was reincarnated by God Kuraiya into a baby.”

“You were from Japan? Then were you from the Edo or Meiji era?”

“No, the year I died was the year 20xx.”

“Is that so? It was year 20xo for me.”

The time warp is quite significantly different.

A mere few years became more than 300 years here.

“The fact that you’re here means that Philosopher-kun wants to prevent the revival of the demon lord.” (Rainstar)

Demon lord sounds ultra-dangerous though ...

“... Apparently, a new hero would be born 40 years later and fight with the demon lord.” (Luciel)

“You sure are well-informed ... ” (Rainstar)

The moment he spun those words, I felt magical power.

“What are you doing?” (Luciel)

“Yup. I appraised you. Even though your profession is a healer, it’s admirable that you trained to this extent in just 6 years. Your high abnormal condition resistance is especially fantastic.” (Rainstar)

“Why the talk as if you’re looking from above?” (Luciel)

“Well it’s since I’m the founder of the healer church ... so, have there been any changes to the church?” (Rainstar)

“Yeah. It’s due to the passing of time but ...” (Luciel)

I briefly talked about the problem with healer’s charges, the labyrinth under the church and the incident in Ienith.

“... Something along those lines. Oh right, the fact that the Pope is your daughter was indeed surprising.” (Luciel)

“I won’t give you my daughter.” (Rainstar)

“Even if you simply wish to say something you had always wanted to say as a father with a daughter, I do not remember having such a relationship with the Pope.” (Luciel)

“Are you not interested in my daughter?” (Rainstar)

“... It’s a hassle so I’d like to continue with the talk, the reincarnation dragons were sealed by the evil god but I’ve released the holy and flame dragon so it’ll somehow be alright right?” (Luciel)

I felt that it was not funny even as a joke so I returned the talk to the main point.

“... You’ll lose with just that. No matter what method you use the most you can do is achieve a draw.”

“Why do you say that?”

“... The main god and the evil god cannot coexist. Similarly, the hero of the light and the hero of the darkness cannot coexist.”

“Ha~”

“The space-time dragon exists but this time, it doesn’t matter. Because the space-time dragon is the temporary appearance of Main God Kuraiya.”

“It’s similar to RPGs where the information comes to light near the end.”

“This is reality ... or not but you will be returning to reality. Rather than that, if the hero does not release the reincarnation dragons, the hero can only use the light attribute while the demon lord can use magic from all attributes except for light and space-time.”

“... So by releasing them the hero’s attributes increases while the demon lord’s attributes decreases?”

“That’s right. During my time I possessed all the attributes so defeating the demon lord was easier than defeating the evil dragon but conversely, it would have been difficult even with the help of the spirits.”

... This guy, only now does he reveal that he was the hero and he killed the demon lord.

“You were the hero? But that was not written in your biography though?”

“I only knew much later that the one I defeated was the demon lord and furthermore, I had a dream.”

“Dream?”

“I wanted to create a city in the sky. I was able to use flight magic before I became an adult due to the help from the spirits. I wanted to share with others that excitement.”

“.....”

“After the holy and flame dragons, I hope that at the very least you release the basic attributes water, wind, and earth dragons. If you do so, the demon lord should only be able to use thunder, gravity, and poison so it should be fine.”

What do you mean by fine, I totally do not get your meaning.

“I no longer want to expose myself to any more danger than I had already faced so by no means am I going to dive into the labyrinths that give me flashbacks of death to release the seals on the reincarnation dragon or dance to the tune of the spirits.”

That’s right.

Survival is my priority so that should be fine.

Fortunately I have money as well, is it not fine if I live my life peacefully?

“... I don’t know the current status of the world but it’s most likely tougher than I can imagine.”

“Yeah. I’m weak enough to almost immediately die when fighting with normal monsters ... this time, the evil god is involved as well so ...”

“Evil god huh ... ah, time’s up. I wanted to talk a bit more but the next time you’re able to come here would be a couple of years later at the earliest.

Which is why for now, if you pass through Rockford’s small gate and touch the large gate, you should be able to meet the earth dragon.

Also, if you visit the city in the sky Nelldal, call out ... to the central fountain.”

“Ha?”

“If you do so, they should definitely become your strength.” *(TL: There wasn’t any pronoun given so it can be he/she/they.)*

“Wait a minute.”

The moment I reached out with my hand, my consciousness once again receded and I was at the town hall when I came to.

“Luciel-sama? What are you waiting for?”

“You look pale?”

Even though we talked so much, it was as if the clock stopped.

Was it because he used space-time magic?

This land might not be a labyrinth but I found out that the earth dragon is indeed here.

Even though it doesn't seem like there's a need to clear a labyrinth ...

Does the fact that there were a lot of ant monsters around this area mean that there's a greater possibility that a lot more ant monsters would appear?

And if I release the earth dragon, the monsters will become weaker?

... I can't make a decision immediately.

Rician and I finished our magical power authorisation.

We had planned to tour around the town after that but Paula and Rician were worried about my poor complexion so we returned to Dolan's workshop.

But, on the way back, I was made painfully aware that in life, one is not given the time to think.

CHAPTER 108

WAY TO RETURN

It happened when we were cutting across the central square after leaving the town hall to return to Dolan's workshop.

Just as I thought that the ground was heaving, 『Gooooogogogogooo』, the earth shook and the ground underneath my feet suddenly collapsed.

“Ha?”

That was all I could muster before I was sucked into the hole.

Immediately after I began to fall into the hole, I grabbed the holy dragon spear from my magic bag, channeled magical power into the spear and attempted to thrust it into the wall to stop my fall. However, the moment the tip of the holy dragon spear lit up, the light reflected on the ant monsters that were crawling up the hole.

“Nuu!?”

Instantly, instead of aiming for the wall, I pointed the spear tip at the ant monsters and maintained my free-fall, piercing the ant monsters one after another.

If the spear used to pierce the ant monsters was an ordinary spear, it most likely wouldn't have broken through the monsters.

As the fear from free-falling caused a pulling sensation on my lower abdomen, my attempt to escape from reality was unsuccessful and I tightly clenched the shining holy dragon spear.

Just as I accelerate from the free-fall, there would definitely be ant monsters ahead and piercing them caused me to decelerate, I repeatedly experienced acceleration and deceleration until an inclination gradually appeared on the side wall.

However, perhaps because my falling speed was too fast, it felt like I slid on a steep slide and my body shot off the wall.

Pain ran through my body from the impact.

“E, 「Area Barrier」, 「Heal」, 「Heal」, 「Heal」.”

To ease the pain, I raised a barrier using 「Chant Termination」 and concentrated on repeatedly using 「Heal」 to relieve the pain but the holy dragon spear lodged in the wall when I was being occupied.

“Guaaaaaa, 「High Heal」 ... Why did it get lodged ... ?! A cave?”

My fall was suddenly halted and because my body could not withstand the G-force, the bones on my arm and shoulder, the blood vessels and muscles screamed in pain but I somehow recovered.

“Does this mean I should proceed this way? Leaving that aside, the 2 of them ... didn’t fall down? ... Hasn’t my luck been fluctuating erratically recently?”

Making sure that the holy dragon spear doesn’t dislodge, I immediately grabbed onto the entrance into the cave-like structure and rolled into the cave while storing the holy dragon spear into my magic bag.

“Ha~. There’s seriously been too much going on today.”

While keeping wary of my surroundings, I applied purification magic on myself before I took out the transformation mirror Dresser from my magic bag and transformed into my full gear.

“It’s been a long time since I dressed up, is this my punishment for being complacent?”

Due to the fall, my clothes were not only dirtied, it was torn in multiple places as well.

I once again sighed grandly before I started moving.

Within the pitch black cave, unlike the faintly lit labyrinths, were hidden dangers of falling from the slightest misstep.

“I’m seriously grateful for Paula and Rician.”

Actually, I had them create a mini version of the light used for the carriage.

I commented to myself that it’s lucky that the headlight I had them make in preparation for emergencies came in handy immediately as I readied my shield and illusionary sword and began advancing.

There weren’t any traps around but the usual holes were present and the ant monsters vaguely seen in the distance below caused me to tremble.

“As expected, I’ll die if I fall into one.”

In the darkness, I could see an astounding number of ant monsters.

I have food and plenty of essentials prepared including the light.

The sole problem is how would I return to the town of Rockford, as I pondered on that question, I advanced while being careful as to not fall into the holes.

“... This place gives me the impression that it wasn’t dug by the ant monsters but naturally formed instead.”

Because the ceiling didn’t even reach 2 meters in height, I was uneasy as I had to bend my posture to walk. However, the width was about 3 meters wide so it wasn’t that claustrophobic.

There were sharp rocks protruding from the ground but thanks to the light I could avoid them as I advanced.

How far have I walked ... 30? or about 50 meters? After walking for about that distance, I came upon a branching point.

“Well, it’s normal to encounter one.”

I decided to choose the path to proceed by following the direction my illusionary sword falls toward.

“Kuraiya-sama, God of Destiny-sama, Buddha, ancestors, Great-luck sensei, please guide me.”

I entrusted my way forward to them and the illusionary sword did not point to either left or right but to the wall directly in front.

“... Perhaps ...”

I picked up the sword and touched the wall directly in front, 『Buun』 a sound rang out and a hole opened up in the wall ... and became a path.

... To be exact, the wall disappeared and a path similarly lit like those in labyrinths appeared.

“What would happen if I walk this path? I don’t want to ... but I feel like the illusionary sword is telling me that I’ll find out if I proceed so I guess I’ll have to fire myself up.”

I decided to proceed along that path.

After walking briefly, there were stairs and after climbing up, a meandering path appeared. There was a single path so I didn’t need to spend time like when I was in a labyrinth to proceed.

“Hmm. There’s a solemn-looking door for some reason ...? Am I supposed to open it?”

The moment I touched the door, it smoothly opened.

《Rain》

《Rain》

《Rain》

《Not Rain?》

《It’s not Rain?》

《Who are you?》

Multiple children voices came from my side when I opened the door ... but there weren’t anybody around.

“Hallucinations ... or more specifically auditory hallucinations huh? Hearing voices when there isn’t anybody around, looks like I’m really tired due to Sir Rainstar. Leaving that aside, it sure is spacious.”

It closely resembled the boss room where I fought with the Red Dragon.

It would be good if it’s a mole, but if it is an Earth Dragon that shakes the earth, then it would be extremely bad. *(TL: Both mole and earth dragon are pronounced the same in Japanese.)*

I was thinking about that when I once again heard the voices.

《Hey, you. Why do you smell like Rain?》

«Idiot. Our voices can't reach regular people.»

«Huh~ but it seems like he has Water-chan's blessing.»

«Then, this goofy-faced guy can see our figures too?»

«No, I can feel fluctuations from dragons from this guy.»

«Hey you, you can hear us right?»

Looks like it wasn't auditory hallucinations after all.

Furthermore, even though they sound like children, it sounded somewhat mysterious so I deduced that they were definitely spirits.

"... I can hear you. I'm Luciel. A hole suddenly opened under my feet and I unfortunately fell down here.

How about I answer your questions if you show me the way back?"

Since I'm currently underground, earth spirits might be able to exhibit oppressive strength so I didn't act impudently.

Regardless of what they say of me ... I continued to cover my expression with an iron mask. *(TL: ie. poker face)*

«Gyahahaha. This guy's so lame~! Or rather, his luck is way too bad.»

«A clumsy person huh. Well, Rain was the same as well so humans are definitely clumsy.»

«Is that why Water-chan gave you her blessing?»

«You can hear our voices right. Then I wonder why can't you find the way back?»

«It's probably because he possess the dragon's blessing so he can't see spirits.»

«It doesn't look like he's contracted any so that might be true.» *(TL: it's referring to contracting spirits I guess?)*

"How did Sir Rainstar attract them?"

The instant I muttered that, the spirits? answered

《Because Rain's magical power tasted like honey.》

《Although real honey is fine too.》

《Now you've made me feel hungry.》

《Hey, foolish-face. Give me something sweet.》

《Magical power is fine too~》

《He's similar to Rain so maybe his magical power is tasty too?》

There's one annoying spirit but I'll endure for now.

"Erm ... how about I present some honey and magical power if you teach me the way to return?"

《Even though he's uncool, his heart feels similar to Rain.》

《Even though he's clumsy, he's generous like Rain.》

《Maybe that's why he's recognized by Water-chan ... ah, this person ...》

《Even though he has a foolish look, he can discern his position and negotiate, he'll become successful in life.》

《I'll teach you, so please.》

《I'll throw in extra so give us plenty.》

Just slightly talking with them caused my fatigue to accumulate but I took out a large bottle from my magic bag that held the highest grade of honey from the Hacchi race and opened the lid.

"What should I do for the magical power?"

《You can just stretch out your hand and accumulate the magical power in your hand. Ah, that's my share so don't eat it~!》

"Is it alright like this?"

The voices I heard previously disappeared but the honey within the large bottle was gone in the blink of an eye. I experimented and took out another large bottle and this time, even the large bottle disappeared.

Seems like they are gluttons.

As I had that thought, my arm felt ticklish at random places and my magical power was being drawn all at once.

《The honey was the best. The magical power is so-so.》

《Come on put in more effort. The honey was great.》

《They're both taste. But, it's tastier if there're more attributes.》

《So you do have some fairly good stuff.》

《Honey is the best! This won't lose to the dragon blessing.》

《Yup. It isn't muddy also, everyone's agreeable right?》

『《Yeah~!》』

The instant about half of my magical power was sucked out, the mechanical announcement sound rang out in my head.

《Blessing of the Earth Spirit acquired》

While thinking that I couldn't help it, this time, I once again wanted to ask for the way back but at that moment, I noticed light-emitting spheres floating about, with brown on the outside that gradually became white in the center.

《That reaction means that he most likely can see us now.》

《There's 2 methods to escape from here.》

《Either you destroy the ant's nest and leave through the large door or you dispel the seal on the Earth Dragon and return using the magic circle.》

《He's annoying but the earth is weak due to his rampage.》

《If the dragon continues being bound, the miasma would become stronger so I'd prefer if you dispel it.》

«The monsters will become stronger if the miasma becomes stronger so if possible, I want you to protect the town Rain created.»

I don't mind if it's just to release it but it feels like it would become a chain of consecutive battles so I don't want to ...

“Why aren't the dwarves fighting the underground monsters?”

«They are already fighting them.»

«The dwarves are stubborn so they don't ask for help.»

«They're doing their best to protect their own country.»

«Their recovery means is also just alcohol.»

«They're being pushed back by plenty of monsters.»

«I believe if it worsens any more, it will be bad even for the sturdy dwarves.»

“... I'll have to recover my magical power, if not, I won't be able to open the door nor will I be able to release it, so we can discuss after that.”

I sat in front of the door leading to the Earth Dragon as told by the spirits and mediated.

When I did so, the spirit who always spoke the last, said a few words and the spirits disappeared.

“... We'll meet again soon huh.”

A slight gloomy feeling remained in my heart but I began meditating.

CHAPTER 109

DRAGONS AND SPIRITS' BELIEFS

As usual, there was a large door before my eyes and the moment I touched it, it began to absorb my magical power.

This time, the door shined a golden-yellow light as a crest gradually appeared and sparkled.

“A sealed door ... is it alright to unseal it? How did the Evil God enter?”

Such thoughts went through my head.

“It’s open. To be safe ... 「Area Barrier」 ... alright, guess I’ll proceed.”

At that point in time, I regretted not having read deeper into why my luck was fluctuating so erratically.

“Looks like it doesn’t lead to stairs.”

Peeking through the opened door, I saw a winding path that continued forward.

I returned the illusionary sword back into the illusionary cane and advanced until the Earth Dragon was captured within my field of vision.

The scales themselves on the Earth Dragon in my sight looked like rocks, giving me an impression of a craggy hill. Black miasma mingled within the Earth Dragon, darker compared to the miasma that was present in the Holy Dragon and Flame Dragon, places where the miasma was the most severe had begun undeadification.

I was beginning to feel slightly relieved after seeing the Earth Dragon remain calm like the Holy Dragon and Flame Dragon but calamity suddenly struck me.

The Earth Dragon’s body started to creak and it began to cry out.

“Guraaagooooo~”

That cry filled my body with dread ... I believe that can't be helped ... but things beyond my expectations continued to happen.

The creaking of the Earth Dragon's body intensified and caused an earthquake along with it.

“Guh, a rampaging dragon ... not funny.”

I lowered my posture and weaved a chant as I clenched my illusionary cane but at that instant, the Earth Dragon's eyes caught sight of me.

The intimidation I felt from those eyes was different from that of the Holy Dragon and the Flame Dragon, hatred was included within it and the mere sight of it caused my body to go rigid and my knees to tremble.

【By the holy hand, by the breath of Mother Earth, by my wish use my magical power as sustenance, like wings of light, using a shield of purification, create a sanctuary that sears everything wicked and impure. Sanctuary Circle.】

Nevertheless, I completed the magic circle and invoked 「Sanctuary Circle」 .

However, as if indicating that it's not affected at all, the Earth Dragon inhaled and released a breath attack directed toward me before it was wrapped by the light of the 「Sanctuary Circle」 .

Naturally, when the breath was heading my way, I immediately took out a large shield and cleared my mind, channelling magical power in order to invoke a wind barrier, but I did not make it in time.

I was engulfed by the Earth Dragon's breath.

Pain, hot, cold, numbness ... I invoked 「Dispel」 , 「Recover」 and 「Extra Heal」 with 「No Chant」 and fell into magical power depletion.

“Ha, ha, ha.” *(TL: He's panting/gasping)*

It was tremendously strange as to why I was still alive.

The large shield was petrified and crumbled into pieces.

And, without realising, I had fallen on my back.

Looking at the roof of the cave, I judged that my thoughts weren't circulating due to my magical power depletion so I took out MP potions to fuel my recovery. But, because it's been a long time since I experienced magical power depletion and the feeling was extremely unpleasant, I once again reaffirmed with myself that I never want to deplete my magical power ever again.

"... It feels disgusting."

At that time, a voice resounded in my brain.

«Liberator who unleashes the seal of the Evil God, I praise you for dispelling the curse on me after doing so for the Holy Dragon and the Flame Dragon.»

To me, the voice within my head when I was feeling unpleasant was as discomforting as the daily household noises you hear during a hangover.

"... Has your consciousness returned properly?"

«Yes. As expected, even I didn't wish to fall to undeadification. I struggled and everything felt annoying. Now, I'm feeling better.»

Thanks to you, I'm the one feeling the worst now!!

"... It was still alright with the Holy Dragon but I feel like I had to struggle a fair amount for the Flame Dragon and you, the Earth Dragon?"

« ... I can't sleep well when spirits come near me.»

It pushed the blame onto the spirits but the grievance it feels does not seem to be normal.

Eyes that harbour such intense hatred is abnormal after all.

I felt miserable due to magical power depletion but I mustered my strength to ask the Earth Dragon.

"Does the spirits and the dragon race not get along well?"

《We worship the Dragon God-sama while they worship the Spirit King.》

Their races are different so it should be inevitable that the subject of their worship is different.

“Just because of that?”

《Even though dragons is the supreme race, the spirits wish to appear as the underlying principle of the world.》

“... To be honest, it doesn't matter to me either way.”

《It ought to be a topic that matters to you.》

“... Why?”

《Because of the destiny of mutual attraction between the holder of blessings from the Gods, dragons, and spirits and the priestess/shrine maiden.》

In other words, my partner?

Mutual attraction, meaning love at first sight?

Or does it refer to being drawn toward the other party?

... But I don't have the confidence of getting back onto my own feet just because it's said to have been decided by the Dragon God and Spirit King ... in the first place, why does it have to be me?

“... The spirits said the same thing as well but ... why me? There are plenty of local heroes or, even better, heroes that exist as vessels right?”

《Eventually, when the gears of your wheel of fates meet, you will naturally understand and you will become the Philosopher.》

I'm totally lost.

Aren't there other reincarnated individuals other than myself?

“... But I don’t want to be embroiled in something as troublesome as being the Philosopher? My goal is to find somewhere to live peacefully.”

《As reward for withstanding my attack and defeating me in a single hit, I gift you with my blessing as well as the fortune scattered about here.》

Ignored once again huh ... I guess I’ll have to grasp this chance to ask my questions.

“... I’ll gratefully accept the treasures. Please tell me this one thing, can’t the Chief God Kuraiya suppress the Evil God?”

《The Evil God does not directly show his movements because he is capable of manipulating the demon race, so the Chief God probably won’t be able to take notice.》

“I don’t have such capabilities.”

《I just hope that you will save my suffering brethren, just like how you saved the Holy Dragon, the Flame Dragon and myself.》

“... If the opportunity presents itself.”

《The gears of fate have already begun to spin.》

“Please stop it if you can.”

《The path that lies ahead for you with the Blessing of the Earth Spirits is merely deplorable earth magic but show me that you can weather through the difficulties.》

“What do you mean? I’ll be able to use earth magic?”

“Kukuku. You, what’s your name?”

The Earth Dragon ignored my words and stopped communicating with its mind.

It seemed like it was already facing difficulty maintaining its body.

I didn't really reap much from this encounter but it was useless to ask about anything else and I could not formulate any thoughts due to the unpleasant feeling I've been experiencing.

"... Luciel."

"Luciel, hold up that cane made from the Holy Dragon's fang in front of me."

"Like this?"

Just like how it was with the Flame Dragon, without giving me a reply, golden-yellow light was sucked into the illusionary cane.

"Luciel, I pray that you will grow into a splendid Philosopher. I've also fulfilled my promise ... Rafi ... ru ... na..."

With those words, the Earth Dragon's body undulated before it became petrified and crumbled.

I imagined that fangs and scales would remain where the Earth Dragon once stood similar to what happened with the Holy Dragon, but instead, various lumps of ores appeared and among the ores were multiple previous gems that I had never seen before.

Apart from that, as usual, there was a large magic stone and treasure chest with a small jewel housed within it.

The next instant, once again, the necklace glowed and flew out from within the magic bag, the jewel snapped onto the necklace and the glow subsided.

"... There are 6 remaining jewels. Nevertheless, I still don't feel like going to collect them."

I've still yet to understand why I survived that breath attack.

I was prepared for death when I was swallowed by the breath.

"I wonder why do dragons always possess treasures."

Except for the large magic stone, I purified the various magic tool-like items, coins, weapons and armours scattered about the room and picked them up before I leaped into the magic circle and my view was dyed with the dazzling light.

『Ping』 【Title: Blessing of the Earth Dragon acquired】

『Ping』 【Title: Dragon Destroyer acquired】

Sounds resounded inside my brain and when the light subsided, I had returned to the entrance to Rockford.

“... I unexpectedly released the dragon and obtained the spirits’ blessing but I totally can’t decide if my luck is good or bad.”

Since everyone is most likely worried about me, I decided to return to the place I fell into the hole.

Just like how Paula did it when we first visited the town, I touched the wall and the verification was successful. The ordinary appearance of the town of Rockford appeared before me but it was wrapped in hustle and bustle unlike when we first arrived.

“Is it because of the ant monsters? I guess so ... if the hole at the town square is not sealed, monsters would come pouring out.”

I whipped my body that had just recovered from magical power depletion into motion and headed directly for the central square.

I felt like I saw Paula’s golem at the central square for a split second so everyone is definitely gathered there.

Believing it was so, I began running.

CHAPTER 110

FLEETING REST

As I kicked the ground hard while I ran, I began to formulate various hypotheses.

I must have defeated enough ant monsters for even Mario to get 1UP when I fell into that hole.

If that's the case, then it will be alright once we defeat the monsters that rose up from that hole.

However, assuming that it's not only a single location where holes appeared, won't the monsters have multiple entrances and exits like an ants nest?

I thought so and tried looking around as I ran but there weren't any holes that had opened up.

When I reached the central square, I saw countless holes as well as inhabitants striking down the monsters that climbed up as if a game of whack-a-mole.

"Is everyone safe?"

Everyone was startled when I called out but then Grand-san raised his voice.

"Luciel-dono is back. Crush the holes."

『Oooo』

All the people present cried out in a uniform voice, making one doubt if they were in fact dwarves, as the inhabitants of Rockford threw in chemicals or dropped rocks using magic tools down the holes before finally, Grand-san and Dolan blocked the holes.

However, they left the hole that I fell into as it was.

"Sorry for worrying you all. Nevertheless, why isn't this hole buried?"

“That’s because if we leave this single location open, magic stones will spring out from here.” *(TL: I guess they’re funnelling the ant monsters out a single hole and killing them to get the magic stones.)*

I’m relieved that it’s not because someone went in to chase after me.

While feeling relieved, I briefly told them of my experience after I fell underground.

“I see. So, this time, it’s an Earth Dragon huh ...”

Lionel’s fighting spirit swelled but I sliced it in two.

“This time, I would have died twice if I had acted wrongly. The first was when I fell into the hole, the second was when I received the breath of the Earth Dragon. Especially the Earth Dragon’s breath ... until now, it’s still a mystery why I survived it.”

Nevertheless, Lionel’s clothes have been dirtied here and there so he definitely flew into the hole once but was most likely stopped by Paula’s golem.

Because I can see cracks on the golem’s arm operated by Paula.

“And so? What’s happening underground? Paula and Rician came to my workshop and I tried to jump into the hole to give chase but an earthquake occurred and holes opened up here and there, it was shocking when monsters came pouring out you know?” (Dolan)

Dolan’s complexion was pale due to the earthquake but it seemed like he participated in the battle.

As I cast 「Recover」, I recalled the story the spirits told me so I reiterated it to them.

“I fell quite deep into the depths and was able to see that there was an insane amount of ants thanks to the torchlight. ... Now that I think about it, the Earth Spirit mentioned that the Dwarf Kingdom was already in battle with the monsters but do you all know about it?” (Luciel)

“What!?” (Grand/Dolan?)

“The dwarves reside underground but they originally lived in caverns and gradually delved underground to expand their dwellings.” (Dolan/Grand?) *(TL: He meant that*

it's inevitable they would encounter monsters underground since they are expanding downwards)

Truly the construction of an underground kingdom.

Well, it can be done as long as they have the capacity to do so.

“... Wouldn't it be better to not do it here?” (Luciel)

“The location where the Earth Dragon and spirits gather is where they consider as the center of the earth.”

“The large number of monsters is a problem but the dwarf race is both stalwart and sturdy. They won't fall behind to the likes of ant monsters.”

The 2 of them are dwarves as well which might be why they feel that way ...

“Since the Earth Dragon is gone, in normal cases with labyrinths, the labyrinth monsters would weaken ... but, what would happen if monsters apart from the ants appeared? Especially monsters from the 40th-floor stratum?” (Luciel)

“... Bad.”

“No, the king and his entourage are still around so it should be alright.”

It depends on the number of these ant monsters but there are likely to be dwarves that can't fight as well.

Taking that into consideration ... eh? I'm surprised at myself for wanting to go help without realising.

It must definitely be because I've been through a lot.

“Before that, do you mind if I get some rest?”

I had them give me some time to rest and refresh my brain.

From Sir Rainstar to fairies and dragon, to the battle between dwarves and monsters, the thoughts in my brain felt like they were being engulfed in a vortex.

It can't be helped that my emotions were unstable due to my flustered state.

Since I am definitely not some protagonist of a story.

Dolan and Grand-san exchanged looks and nodded.

“As expected, it's not like the kingdom would fall immediately.”

“There’s no point in getting flustered without confirming the state they are currently in. This time, I believe Luciel-dono has been through a lot so it would be better to have some rest.”

The 2 of them gave their understanding and the others didn’t disapprove so we decided to return to Dolan’s residence for now.

Since it would be a little late for lunch by the time we reach Dolan’s workshop, I retrieved some food I prepared beforehand from my magic bag for us to eat.

“The measurements for the equipment for the 3 of them are not done yet right?”
(Luciel)

“Yeah. It will take at least 3 days. It would have finished earlier if Toretto was around though.” (Grand)

“Oh yeah, when I released the Earth Dragon, it dropped ores instead of fangs and scales so Dolan, could you take a look at them after your meal? There’s quite a variety of ores and magic tool-like items so I believe there should be some useable ones.”
(Luciel)

“Ooo, I’m looking forward to that.” (Dolan)

“The output from the mines have been slow lately so your luck is quite good.” (Grand)

“It depends on the individual if it is a worthy gain in exchange for battling a dragon, but for me, I would rather not.” (Luciel)

“Oh right, Luciel-dono. It’s alright if you talk to me as you usually do. After all, we’re comrades who have shared drinks together.” (Grand)

“... I’m grateful for your words. I’m finding it a little hard to change the habit I acquired in Ienith.”

“Gahaha. Nevertheless, I’m looking forward to seeing what ores you obtained.”

Just as Dolan and Grand-san were beginning to get hyped, I unexpectedly felt something strike my side.

“Ouch!? Don’t poke my side. What’s wrong Paula? Rician also?”

“If you found magic tools underground, I’d like to borrow them.” (Paula)

“Under present circumstances, we don’t even have magic stones so there isn’t much we can do.” (Rician)

“Alright. But don’t disassemble them.” (Luciel)

“I promise.” (Paula)

“I won’t disassemble them to the point that they can’t be restored.” (Rician)

..... Is it really alright to hand them over?

I pondered, but since there were items that I could not understand what function they served as magic tools, I decided to entrust it to them in the end.

Maybe they were being considerate of my feelings, but nothing was said about the dwarf kingdom nor about the dwarf race.

After we finished our meal, we first headed for Dolan’s workshop.

Then, I began to retrieve the ores from my magic bag, placing them in order as the expressions of the 2 of them hardened.

“Firstly, these most likely fall into the category of jewels.”

Upon aligning the ores neatly, it felt curiously like an ore display corner in a museum.

I felt faint traces of magical power from some of them so I was hoping that they were good items.

Then, for the items that can’t be placed on the table, I arranged them on the cleared floor space but Dolan and Grand-san were already at a loss for words.

They’ve been holding their breath since I began arranging the ores so it had become slightly amusing.

“These are the souvenirs left behind by the Earth Dragon.” (Luciel)

“... Luciel-dono, you really don’t recognize them?” (Dolan)

“Yeah. I’m an amateur after all.” (Luciel)

“... After completing the equipment for Lionel-dono and the others, I can already see the completion of that. It would need a lot of magic stones later but it should reach an operational level.” (Dolan)

“Really?” (Luciel)

“Yes, really.” (Dolan)

“My tension is seriously rising up from hearing that.” (Luciel)

“... What are you guys making? Let me help too.” (Grand)

“I’ll leave it to Dolan to decide on the subcontracting fee. It looks like you’ll enjoy it so please make it cheaper if possible.” (Luciel)

I said that before leaving the workshop.

“Kefin, you’re on the first watch?”

“Yeah. I’ve fought the ant monsters when we were on the way here as well but I’ll defeat them without letting my guard down.”

“Wear this.”

I passed him a robe.

“This robe shouldn’t disintegrate even against the strongest dissolving liquid.”

“Thank you. Well then, I’ll begin my watch.”

Kefin disappeared like a fog.

“Looks like he is keeping to my words to constantly use ninjutsu.”

Kefin, after he decided to tag along with me ... I trained him until he would not die even during tough fights.

I could not peek at other people’s proficiency but while making various guesses, I judged that he could be taught.

I believe that he would be able to become an existence that can protect me.

After seeing Kefin off, I headed toward Paula’s booth when I noticed that at some point in time, a door that allowed passage between Paula and Rician’s rooms had been installed.

“When was this built?”

“I can make something like this in an instant.”

“Leaving this aside, the magic tools.”

Their eyes gave the feeling of children wanting their toys so I calmly took out the magic tools and equipment.

When I finished taking out everything, immediately, the 2 of them peacefully (?) began to analyse the items.

As if I totally did not exist ...

As expected, it felt slightly hurtful so I quietly mumbled.

“I’ll hold on to the magic tools and such in the future seeing as these kids can’t even say a word of appreciation.”

“Sorry. Once I finish analysis, I’ll work hard again.” (Paula)

“I apologize. I will do my best for Luciel-sama.” (Rician)

It looks like the 2 of them heard my quiet mumblings.

“It’s good to compete but do properly greet and reply others.”

“Understood.”

“I understand.”

Saying anything else would only serve as self-satisfaction so I returned to the room I stayed in yesterday and took out my Angel’s Pillow to take a nap.

Without knowing that my heart would pound the next time I opened my eyes, I fell into slumber.

CHAPTER 111

LINE OF COMPROMISE

I was able to get some good rest but it did not resolve my worries.

That is to be expected though ...

As soon as I opened my eyes while thinking about that, I met gazes with something.

“Dowaaaaa”

I pushed the face of the being in front of my eyes away with all my might.

A lukewarm wind grazed my palm the moment I touched the face.

“That hurts. I wonder if this is the whip of love ... if it is then my tension is building up fo~”

“This spine-chilling sensation and that ‘fo~’ expression ... Toretto-san?”

The face was way too up close until I couldn’t even notice that it was a middle-aged man’s face with makeup on.

Moreover, there wasn’t even 10cm distance in between us ... he didn’t do anything right?

“That’s right. It’s alright if you go back to sleep. This time around, I’ll get what I want. I was so close just now ...”

Looks like I haven’t been violated.

Even now my heart was still thumping violently as if on a rampage.

After taking in a deep breath, I decided to ask Toretto-san.

“I’d like to politely decline. Nevertheless, why did Toretto-san come here?”

“Cause I sensed an interesting odor ... just kidding. I heard from the church headquarters that Luciel-kun was bringing his companions toward Rockford so I came.”

“Really? I’m thankful for that. To be honest, I’ve suffered a breath from the Earth Dragon and was on the brink of death so I’m worried about the maintenance for my armor and robe.”

“Okay~, they have the automatic repair function so I believe it should be fine but I’ll take a look later.”

“Thank you.”

“Then change out of your clothes and pass me your armor.”

“Okay.”

After changing using the transformation mirror Dresser, I handed 1 full set of armor from Dresser to Toretto-san.

“I’ll be doing the maintenance at Paula-chan’s workshop so stop by later. My heart’s dancing from touching good armor after such a long time fo~”

I was planning to walk to the underground workshop together but Toretto-san briskly walked out of the room.

“Just like a hurricane ... If Toretto-san becomes Paula’s magical tool manufacturing mentor, even with Paula’s taciturn nature, I feel like she’ll be able to understand his knowledge regarding magical tools.”

I laughed, and once again sat down on the bed to organize my thoughts on the current situation.

Having the knowledge that the dragons are suffering, I do wish to release them all but that is not realistic.

Since they are all located at the very end of labyrinths after all.

Nevertheless, thinking of the Earth Dragon that is able to shake a location 2 days travel away, I can feel the threat of the Earth Dragon with that alone.

Of course, the breath is dangerous as well but if the earthquakes continued indefinitely, it would invigorate the ant monster like what happened this time and cause an extraordinary amount of damage.

... Giving that a thought, this time, I happened to release the dragon first, if I assume that this is a labyrinth, the monsters in the various boss rooms should still be alive.

“If it’s an existence like a queen ant-like monster that produces the ant monsters ... this place is no longer safe ...”

Regardless of this place being the location they were converted into slaves, knowing the effort put in for me by Dolan and the others, even if I can be thick-skinned and act as if nothing is wrong, it won’t be able to sit well within me if I ignore the situation. I was sick of being indecisive.

Due to the blessing I received this time around, I’ve acquired Earth-type attribute but as expected, since I don’t have spellbooks, it looks like it will be some time before I can experience this blessing.

Magician’s Guild ... as well as the city in the air, I can imagine a bright future where I hope to go there but, in the end, I came to the conclusion that I will not be able to proceed without strengthening my foothold.

“I’ll only be going around in circles if I attempt to think deeper into it. If that’s the case, it’ll be alright if I just let everyone do the fighting and provide healing assistance from within a safe zone.”

After praying for the arrival of peaceful days, I descended down to the workshops.

When I arrived underground, Kefin was there but I did not see Cathy around.

“Kefin, how is the outside situation?”

“Luciel-sama, are you already alright?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s relieving. Currently, the ant monsters are coming out of the remaining hole but it’s only from a single location and the number of holes has not increased after

that. Because of that, although the number of ant monsters that have appeared is high, they did not come out at the same time so it's not to a troubling level."

"... For example, if a thousand ant monsters surround Lionel and the others, do you have confidence that they'll win?"

"... Assuming that there's sufficient space, that they can receive healing even if the opponents all attack at the same time and that their equipment doesn't break, I believe that they would somehow make it."

Kefin replied while choosing his words.

Well, it was as I had guessed.

Either they desire to especially travel to the jaws of death or seek death within the battlefield, those are just about the 2 choices of battle maniacs.

"It'll depend on the situation. Furthermore, the dwarven race appears stalwart and robust but I've heard that many of them have stubborn personalities.

As long as there are no requests, as soon as the measurements are done, I plan to go to the city of Meratoni with everyone."

"I'll follow you no matter where you go."

I was slightly pleased by the resolve reflected in Kefin's eyes as he said that.

"I'll have this talk with Dolan and the others. To gather information ... I might have you visit the Dwarf Kingdom."

"I'm the right man for the job. It's alright. I won't make a blunder."

Kefin laughed as he opened the door to Dolan's workshop.

"Mind if I interrupt for a moment?"

When I entered the workshop, the 3 of them stopped what they were doing and looked over.

"Ooo, are you already alright?" (Grand/Lionel)

“Yeah. When I woke up, Toretto-san’s face was approaching mine closely so I received various mental damages but the ill feeling from magical power depletion is gone.” (Luciel)

“... I see. Luciel-sama, you knew Toretto?” (Dolan)

“Yeah. The robe I’ve always worn was made by Toretto-san.” (Luciel)

“... In the past, he was a regular fox beastman but ... Paula got emotionally attached to him so it was alright but ...” (Dolan)

Dolan cast’s his eyes down with a dark expression.

“... Luciel-sama, um, I’ve given that man responsibility for the armors but is it alright?” (Lionel)

“There’s no problem with respect to his skill. Compensation-wise, I’ll pay if it’s money but if it’s to do with the body, you’ll have to deal with it yourself.” (Luciel)

I told him with a grin.

Lionel had a speechless expression but I ignored it and conveyed the talk I had with Kefin just now to them.

“... And so, please keep in mind that we will be leaving here as soon as the measurements are complete.”

“... Thank you Luciel-dono. Dolan, we should write a letter to the king.”

“Yes, elder brother Grand. As expected of Luciel-sama. From now on, I’ll do my best with all sincerity as well.”

Dolan said as he bowed before he began to write a letter with Grand-san.

“Luciel-sama, the interior of the hole was not that wide right?” (Lionel)

“The height was about 2 meters. You might not be able to swing a greatsword there.” (Luciel)

Lionel was brimming with the urge to go to battle and seemed to be simulating combat in his mind.

After the 2 people writing the letter finished, they lectured Kefin about the method to enter the Dwarven Kingdom.

“Kefin, don’t overdo it. Your task is to return alive so think of delivering the letter as secondary. Also, magical power authentication ... and it would be good if you listen to a couple of the answers to those golems.” (Luciel)

“I’ve already done the magical power authentication but ... that’s right, it would be difficult to enter and exit if I can’t answer a couple of the questions.” (Kefin)

“Well then, Kefin, I’ll entrust this to you.”

“Yes!”

I moved from Dolan’s workshop to Paula and Rician’s workshop.

“Paula, Rician. I’d like to ask you 2 to develop magical tools that can illuminate darkness similar to the torchlight.” (Luciel)

“No magic stones.” (Paula)

“Furthermore, aren’t there already about 10 torchlights?” (Rician)

“... Sorry, I mixed up the order of the story.

We might possibly venture out to defeat the monsters coming out from the central square.

Also, I’ll pull out magic stones from the ant monsters that I have not finished dismantling. I’ll pass you 2 those so please make do with them somehow.” (Luciel)

“Understood.” (Paula)

“I understand.” (Rician)

The 2 of them nodded.

“And so? What should I do?” (Toretto)

“There’s a possibility that we’ll be going into combat so thank you in advance for the equipment maintenance.” (Luciel)

“Alright~ it’s boring but I’ll let it slide this time.” (Toretto)

“There are various ores at that workshop there so please use those. I’ll pay you the maintenance fees later.” (Luciel)

“That’s fine. Leave it to me then.” (Toretto)

“Thank you.” (Luciel)

Thus, I’ve given instructions to everyone and I suddenly had free time so, since there’s a chance we’ll need a large amount of food if we go into battle, I began cooking.

CHAPTER 112

MESSENGER FROM THE DWARF KINGDOM

When I was in the midst of cooking, Cathy returned but she was slightly flustered.

“What’s wrong?”

“The hole is gradually beginning to widen nya. If we don’t get Dolan-san or Grand-san’s help to reinforce it, it might be bad nya.”

“Were there any injuries?”

“None, for now, nya.”

In this town, even at night, it was still modestly bright due to the pseudo-moon and pseudo-stars.

It looked like the time was around dusk, there’s a possibility that the monsters might overflow instantly if the hole continues to widen into the night so just to be safe ...

“Then, to secure magic stones, I guess I’ll go over too.”

“I’d prefer if you don’t fall down a hole this time nya.”

“... I’ll position myself carefully.”

After that, I spoke to Cathy and it was decided that Dolan would come along and we ultimately arrived at the central square.

“It has certainly widened. Dolan, is the Dwarf Kingdom close by?”

“About an hour from here.”

“Do you think that this hole might be connected to the Dwarf Kingdom?”

“Why?”

“... In that case, if we reconstruct this to a flight of stairs, this position will become assailable as well right? When that happens, we’ll be able to disperse the monsters that are headed for the Dwarf Kingdom to head here as well.”

“I see. However, as might be expected, I don’t have a firm grasp of the underground structure.”

Well, that’s normal.

While apologizing for blurting out what came to mind, I told them that I planned to use the torchlight to shine into the hole to take a look.

“Cathy, I’ll leave the monsters to you. When I shine the torchlight while making sure not to fall in, if the monster numbers are large, Dolan, please bury the hole for the time being.”

“Understood nya.”

“I will not allow Rockford to fall to monsters!”

I held the torchlight and Holy Dragon Spear as I approached the hole and shined the light.

The monsters that appeared within the hole rapidly stirred and a literal horde rushed forward. I pierced with my spear while Cathy leaped as she began attacking to prevent the ants from coming out of the hole.

“Dolan!”

Dolan touched the ground and the ant hole narrowed but it stopped just as it was on the verge of closing completely.

“Dolan, it’s better if you don’t completely seal it. It’s better than not knowing where they might appear and cause confusion.”

If we don’t figure out why the ant monsters are stirring, I have a feeling we might not be able to stop the monsters.

I have not heard of any previous cases where monsters invaded this town since the time Sir Rainstar constructed it.

The earthquakes alone do not fully explain it.

I had a nagging feeling that it was so.

“If this was going to be the case, it would have been better if we brought Paula along and asked her to solidify the surface of the ground.” (Dolan)

“I can call her over nya?” (Cathy)

“Cathy and I are needed to exterminate the ants. For the sake of unforeseen circumstances, Dolan, you have to remain here as well.” (Luciel)

“Hmm, then shall we ask somebody to run an errand?” (Dolan)

“... We’ll stay like this until Kefin returns. It’s not like the researchers in this town would suck their thumbs and merely watch right?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. But, there isn’t someone to lead as a commander.” (Dolan)

“Dolan, your complexion is pale? Don’t tell me, there’s a difference in burying the earth and completely sealing the hole?” (Luciel)

“... If I could not stop just now, I would have fallen into magical power depletion.” (Dolan)

“I’d prefer if you told me that in advance.” (Luciel)

“Cathy, what about Lionel?” (Luciel)

“... I believe he’s capable of doing so, but he won’t do it nya.” (Cathy)

“Ha~. Then, when I’m leading, would he give me advice?” (Luciel)

“Of course nya.” (Cathy)

“Only if it becomes a defensive battle though. Leaving that aside, do the monsters feed on the dead monster’s corpses?” (Luciel)

“I don’t know nya. But there is such a possibility nya.” (Cathy)

“I’ve heard that monsters also go into territorial disputes.” (Dolan)

“So we’ll have to defeat them in a way that they don’t fall back down huh. It won’t be funny if the others consume them and level up.” (Luciel)

If I’m not mistaken, ants are omnivores and I imagine that they are capable of eating anything so it will be bad if that happens.

Until Kefin returned, we concentrated on defeating the monsters.

Because at most only 3 monsters can appear from the hole at the same time, it wasn't that hard of a fight as long as we defeated them pre-emptively, but when I shined the torchlight, the ants clustered together in the hole.

I tried using purification magic but it had no effect so we have no choice but to continue cutting them down like this? Or was it better if we had buried them? I wondered about that.

While I was wondering, a visitor appeared.

"Luciel-sama, sorry to keep you waiting."

Kefin returned with 2 dwarves.

"You're back, they are?"

"Yes. They are the Dwarf King's aides, Guraio-dono and Aresurei-dono. I was told to bring them along no matter what so I could not refuse ... the 2 of them will convey the additional information."

"I see. Kefin, swap places with me. Cathy, please hold out for slightly longer. Dolan, please participate in the talks with me."

『Yes!』

At that instant, the complexion of the 2 dwarves changed.

I don't know whether it was because I directed him, I called him without any honorifics or that Dolan obediently followed.

Well, I'm currently not bothered by their reactions.

"I am Luciel, S-rank healer of Saint Schull's Church. Well then, please tell me the response from the king of the Dwarf Kingdom at once." (Luciel)

"... Here?" (Dwarf 1)

"With the criminal Do ..." (Dwarf 2)

"I dare you to say any more, I will not hesitate to abandon my obligation towards the Dwarf Kingdom." (Luciel)

“Luciel-sama.” (Dolan)

“He is my retinue who has spared no efforts for my sake and is currently hired as the head of my research and development team. I think it is better if you commit that into your skull before you speak?” (Luciel)

The 2 of them exchanged startled looks and whispers before they began speaking once again.

“We apologize for the disrespect. I am Guraios. We have suffered casualties so the Dwarf King hopes to request for aid but he has tasked us to determine if we dwarves are able to pay for the healer fees.” *(TL: He used respectful speech xD)*

“... Kefin, what was your impression of the Dwarf Kingdom?”

“It was fatigued. It’s not as if all their residents have a good command of combat and their days should be numbered.”

“What did you say! Are you making fun of us dwarves!!”

“... To be honest, it doesn’t matter what you think so don’t interrupt our conversation. He may be a slave but he is also my follower. He is an outstanding personnel who is capable of accurately conveying information. What I want to hear now are not emotion-backed arguments.”

I shot down the remark from the man called Araios. *(TL: The author switched from Guraios to Araios for some reason, don’t know if typo or originally it was meant to be Araios)*

“Did it look like they had a shortage of food?”

“It didn’t look like food was a problem but the rapid expenditure of equipment and the need for treatment of the wounded were clearly more pressing problems. We confronted many monsters on the way to the Dwarf Kingdom.”

“Ha~. Kefin, please call everyone over. Please ask Grand-san and Toretto-san to come as well.”

“Yes!”

The 2 dwarves were shocked when Kefin disappeared.

A person disappearing would look like they transferred so I probably would have been shocked too.

I looked at the 2 dwarves and asked.

“As you can see, due to the impact of the earthquake today, Rockford was also attacked by monsters. What I want now is information regarding the situation underground. For example, are other monsters present as well when the ant monsters attack or what exactly is the boss of the ants? Or is there more than one? Please tell me what you know. Incidentally, this is the fee table for a healer.”

After handing over the guidelines, I continued the ant extermination with Cathy.

“Does it look like we’ll be able to help them nya?”

“I don’t know. It depends on their choices. If there are many individuals similar to Arais, I am no longer burdened like in Ienith so I won’t deliberately go to a dangerous place like the Dwarf Kingdom.”

“During that time in Ienith, it would have been better if the choices could be split so clearly nya.”

“I was burdened by way too much in Ienith. Even though it was already tough enough with just Kefin and you all.”

I smiled bitterly as I strike the ants.

“That’s cruel nya. Leaving aside Dolan and Paula, we were obedient ...”

“It’s more like I didn’t find out.” (Luciel)

“Well, you had opponents as well so it was inevitable on Lionel and your part.” (Luciel)

I did not direct my gaze toward the 2 Dwarven King’s aides as we both talked.

After giving them the pricing plan, I plan to ascertain what they think and I wonder how their attitudes will change when Grand-san arrives.

I did not know what was the content of the letter written by Dolan and Grand.

However, I had already decided to trust them.

While we defeated the monsters, the dwarves did not approach us nor did they speak to us.

At that point, Grand-san arrived but he ignored the 2 of them and headed my way before bowing.

“I’m sorry. But, it is still my hometown after all. I hope that you will help.”

“Well, I’ve already prepared myself. I was just thinking about the course to take to the Dwarf Kingdom.

I’d like to ask Dolan, Paula, and Rician to defend here. Only defend, absolutely do not enter the hole.

Please cooperate with everyone to defend this town.

I don’t mind if you use all the magic stones from the monsters corpses lying there.”

『Yes!』

“I’m sorry that you came at an awkward timing but, Toretto-san, I’d like to ask you to support them.

You’re the only one capable of directing them.”

“Fo~!! My fighting spirit will overflow if you give me that scorching look. Just this one time, I’ll do my best for the sake of my 2 disciples.”

After brilliantly avoiding Toretto-san’s wink, I continued giving out instructions.

“Lionel, I’d have you defend with the large shield and fight with the short spear.

Cathy and Kefin will be the mobile unit, I’ll be responsible for healing and support.

Also, I’ll have Grand-san come along with us.

I’d like to ask Grand-san to conduct all the negotiations with the Dwarf King.”

“... Are you alright with giving me that task?”

“Yes. Currently, there are only 3 dwarves I trust in this world, Dolan-san, Paula, and Grand-san.”

“... Understood. Fu~ You’ve changed considerably after a couple of years.”

“The reason why you think that I’ve changed may be because I have reliable companions by my side now.”

As I replied to Grand-san’s bitter smile with my own smile, I made a single resolve.

In the worst case, even if the Dwarf Kingdom collapses, we will survive.

CHAPTER 113

THE STRIFE-LADEN DWARF KINGDOM

This time, taking into consideration that the monsters might appear from underground, we decided to not move via horses and walk on foot instead.

Together with the messengers from the Dwarf Kingdom, we formed a 7 men party and departed from Rockford.

“Luciel-sama, I believe that the situation wouldn’t change much even if we rush toward the Dwarf Kingdom now. It would be better if we have our meal first.”

“That’s certainly true.”

Lionel advised so we ended up having our dinner at that spot.

The 2 from the Dwarf Kingdom raised complaints.

But, Grand-san was in agreement with our decision so they could not speak out.

I did not bother to aid the 2 of them at all with the preparation of their meals.

“It sure is dark. It’s clearly different from Rockford.”

“Luciel-dono, there’s no helping it since monsters would be attracted if we illuminated the area with lights. Please use the torchlight.”

Grand-san and the others, as well as the messengers from the Dwarf Kingdom, possess the skill called Night Vision. Grand-san taught me that it was a skill that could ensure a certain degree of vision even among the darkness.

It looks to be a skill that can be nurtured and acquired in dark places and apparently the majority of the dwarves possess it.

“There’s no moonlight tonight but it won’t be a problem if we follow the route set by Kefin.” (Grand)

“That’s right. I believe I won’t get lost with the torchlight.” (Kefin)

“Kefin, I leave the directions to you.” (Luciel)

“Yes.”

As though advancing with only 5 men, we left the fake town.

Because the earthquakes had stopped after the Earth Dragon was released, there weren't any holes that suddenly opened up on the ground.

Due to the combination of Cathy and Kefin detecting monsters, we quickly defeated them.

I held a sense of distrust toward the 2 messengers from the Dwarf Kingdom.

They did not take the lead to guide the way nor did they participate in the battles.

Moreover, due to them acting like it is natural, I could only feel irritated by them.

After walking for a while after that, Kefin called out.

“We've arrived. Looks like we are able to enter from here.” (Kefin)

“We'll lead the way from here.” (Guraios)

“Come along.” (Aresurei)

The 2 dwarves called Guraios and Aresurei took the initiative and walked ahead.

I stood still there and looked at Grand-san.

“... I know what you want to say. I'm terribly sorry but please forgive what has just happened.”

Since Grand-san appealed to me with a quiet voice, I had no choice but to take a deep breath and gratify the 2 of them by following behind them.

The height of the cave leading to the Dwarf Kingdom was about 2 meters tall, similar to the path I took before I met the spirits.

“It does seem like it would be difficult to swing my greatsword here with this ceiling height.” (Lionel)

“You can swing your greatsword to your heart’s content if there’s combat when we reach the defensive line of the Dwarf Kingdom. You have no choice but to use a short sword for anything else though ...” (Luciel)

“... It looks like I won’t have a turn this time so I’ll leave it to Cathy and Kefin while I defend Luciel-sama...” (Lionel)

“I’d prefer if you are slightly more enthusiastic about that task.” (Luciel)

The overtly disappointed Lionel only gave me a wry smile.

Even though he would definitely guard me when the need arises, maybe I should try to emulate that unshakable thirst for battle of a battle maniac like him.

As we walked along the winding path, the path split into 2. We could proceed without getting lost but monsters appeared at that point so we stopped.

I looked at Grand-san and kneaded my brow.

“I’ll leave it to you, Cathy. Kefin, you’ll lead the way.” (Luciel)

“Please wait. We will serve as the guides.” (Dwarves)

“Then quickly go ahead and defeat the monsters. For what reason exactly did you 2 travel out for?” (Luciel)

“” “” (Dwarves)

“Grand-san ... it’s alright, right?” (Luciel)

“Yeah.” (Grand)

“Let’s go nya.” (Cathy.)

Cathy kicked the ground, kicked the wall and slaughtered the ant monsters.

Kefin passed that by and began leading the way.

“I guess I might as well gather them.”

I followed while collecting the magic stones.

After that, we encountered combat multiple times but they still completely remained as ornaments who only watched from afar.

“It will be the Dwarf Kingdom after we turn this corner.”

The instant Kefin announced that, Aresurei ran ahead alone.

Everyone was at a loss for words. But, I was able to make a conjecture by looking at Grand-san.

“... Don’t tell me, you all are ...”

Just as I said that, a scream echoed out from within the cave.

Cathy and Kefin shoot out like bullets toward the bent path Aresurei went down.

Seeing that, we followed as well and saw the figure of Aresurei getting bitten on the shoulder by an ant.

The ant monster immediately turned into a lump of meat under Cathy’s attack.

“How is he?” (Luciel)

“He’s injured but it’s not life threatening.” (Kefin)

“Ha~. 「Recover」, 「Heal」.” (Luciel)

I cast with 「Chant Termination」 and ordered Kefin to shoulder carry Aresurei.

After that, we arrived at the Dwarf Kingdom almost immediately.

“Now then, it looks like it has become a battle, Lionel, please proceed to the defensive line.”

“Yes.”

Lionel’s face showed a momentary grin when I passed him his flame greatsword and a headlight.

“Cathy, cover my surroundings, I’ll first rescue and recover the wounded.”

“Nya.”

Cathy was full of smiles as well knowing that she would be following me to a combat area.

“Kefin, escort the 2 messengers back to the king and Grand-dono, please explain to the king that Kefin is my follower.”

“Yes.” (Kefin)

“... Understood.” (Grand)

Kefin nodded while Grand-san lowered his head.

While thinking that Grand-san will have to play a disadvantageous role, we started to move out.

As the dwarves were fighting with the monsters, Lionel introduced himself and joined in the battle.

“I am Lionel, the retainer of Saint Schull’s Church S-rank healer Luciel-sama. I come to assist the dwarves.”

With a swing of his greatsword, a few ant monsters were sent flying as they burned.

“Lionel looks like he’s having fun.” (Luciel)

“He told me that he’s been wanting to fight since we were in Ienith nya.” (Cathy)

“Anyway, let’s look for any injured people.”

“... There nya. Wounded soldiers are being carried there nya.”

“I’m surprised you can see that despite how dim it is in here.”

“There are many among the cat beastmen who possess the Night Vision skill as well nya.”

I chased after Cathy directly toward the building she mentioned where the dwarf soldiers were being carried to.

The interior of the building was bright so I could see a lot of wounded people inside.

Nobody looked toward us nor did they seem to be interested but I felt that it was convenient for us too.

“I am Luciel, the owner of Dolan-dono and S-rank healer of Saint Schull’s Church. I was begged by all means by Dolan-dono so I’ve come to heal you all. Where are the ones that are the most wounded?”

Once I said that, the dwarves all faced here simultaneously.

Some of them showed glimpses of anger but they most likely determined that treatment came first and called out to me.

“This guy here is the most injured.”

When I rushed over, I saw a dwarf on death's bed, bleeding from his shoulder, flank and leg.

“As expected of a dwarf, praised for their sturdiness. 「High Heal」 .”

Under my 「Chant Termination」 「High Heal」 , his gouged out shoulder rose up and began to heal perfectly.

“Since he's lost quite a lot of blood, he should be able to move about soon after he gets a proper meal.”

I heard the gasps from the round-eyed dwarves who witnessed that spectacle.

I immediately announced before they got out of control.

“Please move all the heavily injured people within a 3-meter radius around me. Then, those who are able to move on their own, please enter yourself. I will heal everyone. If you wish to thank someone for this, thank Dolan. Now then, where's the next heavily injured person?”

After a total of 3 「Area High Heal」 , all of the dwarves in the building could once again pick up their weapons so I sent them off with a 「Area Barrier」 .

“Someone please guide me to a place where there are injured people.” (Luciel)

“... I'll guide you.”

It was the dwarf who informed me of the first heavily wounded person.

“Okay. If there's a life to be saved, it's my job to do so.” (Luciel)

“I'll be in-charge of maintaining vigilance nya.” (Cathy)

Immediately after leaving the building, the dwarf spoke.

“... Is Dolan-san healthy?”

“Yeah. He's back in shape and I'm having him craft various items.”

When I said that, the dwarf turned around and made to grab at me.

However, before he could do so, Cathy's rapier was pointed at the dwarf's neck.

"What a load of crap ... Dolan-san has already lost both his arms."

"If it's Dolan's 2 arms, I've already properly healed them. Paula is also happily developing magical tools every day."

After I said that with a smile, the dwarf was momentarily befuddled before he slapped himself and spoke while glaring at me.

"To sink your poisonous fangs into Paula-chan in addition to Dolan-san ..."

"Like I've said I have not done anything like that. Furthermore, the both of them are no longer slaves."

"What?!"

"That's true nya. Currently, Grand-dono is on the way to the dwarf king, you can find out about it later nya."

"Gr, Grand-sama?! Excuse my rudeness."

"Leave the apologies for later, I'd rather go to where the wounded who are currently in distress are?"

"This way."

Cathy and I exchanged laughs at the dwarf who suddenly became gallant and his guiding manner professional as we followed after him.

From there, I was led to multiple other buildings and I healed the people with injuries.

When there were no longer any more wounded people within the buildings, the dwarf who was guiding us finally spoke.

"I am terribly sorry for the late introduction. I am Randall, the leader of the defence here."

"Okay, nice to meet you. Well then, let's go to the battle zone next."

"Are we still able to continue? Isn't the king waiting?"

"... It doesn't matter what the king is doing, the front lines are where the danger is greatest so the treatment of the wounded takes priority."

"... Ye ... Yes, sir."

Randall-san's demeanour has been steadily changing so he's most likely a person who feels strongly for his companions.

Following him, I went around the places where they were struggling in battle to provide healing and Cathy came back to report that all the front lines were pushing outward.

"The healed dwarves joined the battle so the tide was completely reversed nya. Furthermore, Lionel-sama is there ..."

I understood what she meant before she said anymore ... or rather, it was made known to me.

"Gahaha. This is not enough, more, come at me more."

Hearing Lionel's loud laughter, I could deduce the situation.

"I'll set healing there as the last stop ... once I've finished treatment, could you guide me to the king?"

"Yes. Leave it to me."

In that manner, I applied healing magic and 「Area Barrier」 on all the forces and converged with Lionel.

By the time he returned to guarding me, Lionel was smiling from the chance he had to vent his feelings.

I ignored such a Lionel and after getting rid of the odour of ants and the burnt smell with purification magic, I spoke to the dwarves in the front lines.

"... Everyone, please work hard without overextending yourselves like my retainer here. Randall-dono, please lead the way."

"Eh, ah, yes. This way."

Randall-san was quite considerably shocked by the mountain-like pile of ant monster corpses but he was shaken awake by my words and began guiding us to the building where the dwarf king awaits.

CHAPTER 114

TREATMENT OF SLAVES

Regarding the place I was led to where the dwarf king lived, rather than call it a home, it was more fitting to call it a temple.

It was a building with that kind of structure.

It was a construct that was reminiscent of the European temples from the memories of my previous life, so much so that I wished to have a camera to take a commemorative shot of it.

We were guided as it is to enter the building.

However, the lack of a door made me recall a strong sense of discomfort so I asked about it.

“Why isn’t there a door in this building?” *(TL: As in there’s an entrance but no door to block it)*

“To protect the residents who can’t fight. There’s a directive saying that they can flee here anytime.”

“ ... What happens if the ones fighting outside now are rendered incapable of combat and the monsters appear when they are fleeing toward here?”

“ ... We’ll most likely be trapped.”

Looks like he felt the danger I sensed.

“ ... What about the king, his retainers and the king’s soldiers?”

“The ones currently fighting are the king’s soldiers and I am also one of them. ... The king will most likely also fight till the bitter end.”

The number of people is unexpectedly small for a kingdom, or maybe the population is low because a substantial amount of them engage in combat professions, so I thought.

“We’ll think about it when the time comes ... Before that, could you guide me to where the injured general citizens are?”

“ ... Yes, sir. This way.”

I prioritized treating the wounded over going to the place the dwarf king was waiting. Then, the place we moved to had many wounded individuals but ...

There weren't any dwarves present, instead, there were many humans as well as other races.

In addition, slave crests were affixed to their arms, chests, forehead or necks.

So this is how slaves are like in this world ... I thought vaguely.

The fact that there are slaves who don't wish for recovery means there are those who wish to pass away like this, it was that kind of slaves.

“ ... Is everyone here a slave?”

“Yeah. They are the slaves who were used to hold back the ant monsters at all fronts initially. These slaves can use magic so once their magical power has recovered, they will be made to return to the front lines to continue fighting.”

“ ... But there are those who appear to suffer from severe injuries as well though? Won't they become incapable of moving once they lose too much blood?”

“That's right. But, since it is an emergency situation, it is less objectionable for the slaves to be killed compared to our compatriots being killed.”

“ ”

Randall-san's answer was not wrong.

I would most likely do the same thing and if my position was different, I would have likely answered the same way.

I felt a chill in my body as I was pondering about that.

Then, I felt 2 warm touches on my back.

When I realized it, Lionel and Cathy were supporting me.

“This is the typical treatment of slaves.”

“The typical mindset nya.”

They smiled but also looked somewhat sad.

Perhaps, the 2 of them were thinking what if they were in their position and suffered that kind of treatment ...

“I will treat them but I would like to stop them from having to return to the front lines immediately. I will be speaking with the dwarf king after this but there is a possibility that they will be used as chess pieces as a result.”

“ ... Understood. Well, I’ll be accompanying you and they have slave contracts so they can’t leave here. So there won’t be any problems.”

“Then, I’ll immediately heal them.”

When I approached the slaves, the slaves termed as general citizens stared at me with expressions frightened to despair. I applied healing magic on the slaves while acting like I didn’t mind it.”

Regardless of gender, there were many who suffered deep injuries.

However, apparently healing magic had been applied on the slaves to the extent of closing their wounds, by the time I finished applying my magic, all of them touched the places where they were injured countless times and confirmed it by tapping the wound locations.

When I thought that I have treated everyone, I confirmed a few slaves who were allowed to sleep on beds as if being given better treatment compared to the other slaves.

“ ... These slaves are?”

“They should be the slaves who are capable of using healing magic if I remember correctly.”

... That completely makes me believe that they are related to the church though?

“Since when were these people obtained?”

“Perhaps the slave dealer who bought Dolan-san expanded, he came here almost a year ago and slaves who could use healing magic were valuable so ...”

“ ... What’s wrong? They’re valuable so?”

“The dwarf king’s son decided to buy them.”

“ I see. What these people need is rest. Are there any other wounded people? Are there no beastmen slaves who can’t use magic?”

“ ... There are no longer any remaining.”

“ ... I see ... Well then, could you guide me to where the dwarf king is?”

While clenching both my fists, I forcibly smiled and squeezed out my voice.

“Ye, yes.”

For some reason, Randall-san looked at me with dread and immediately starting moving.

As the slaves noticed that I was about to leave the room, they conveyed words of appreciation.

But, I walked off without responding to their words.

Lionel and Cathy spoke to me as I walked while looking at that back of Randall-san.

“ ... Shall I do the negotiations?” (Lionel)

“It will become complicated if you are that angry nya.” (Cathy)

“ ... No, it’s alright. But, is it alright if I feel like crushing the Dwarf Kingdom?” (Luciel)

“Yeah. For such a thing to occur while the outside world is unaware ... it sure is typical.” (Lionel)

“ ... I’ll also have to reflect on the treatment of slaves nya.” (Cathy)

“The past you 2 have is in the past. Furthermore, it might just be me who is abnormal.”

As I smiled listlessly, we had apparently arrived at a location that looked like an audience hall.

“This is the room where visitors will pass through. If Grand-sama is around, he should be here.”

When the door was opened, for some reason, it was a strange situation whereby Grand-san was defending Kefin from the dwarves.

“ ... What’s this? Would anyone explain what’s happening to me?”

“Luciel-sama.”

Kefin faced me and knelt with his head bowed.

He was armed with a sword as usual but he did not unsheathe it.

Grand-san who was behind Kefin looked like he was about to speak out before he held his tongue.

“I’m still looking for an explanation as to what is the cause of this situation?”

“That slave could not protect me so he’s being chastised.”

Aresurei said without a single look of shyness.

My anger reached the apex but I spoke.

“And so, who’s the dwarf king.”

“This is the Dwarf Kingdom! Regardless of your affiliation with the church, you are in no way a person in a high position.”

Paying no heed to Aresurei’s words, I conveyed my will to everyone to return to Rockford.

“... If the dwarf king is not around, I don’t care about anything else. Kefin, you did well to endure that. Let’s go back. Grand-san, to think the day I would be disappointed in you would come ...”

The dwarf king called out when I had turned my heel.

“Wait, I am Rockwell, the dwarven king.”

“We’re going back, everyone.”

I ignored the dwarf king’s words and did not change my posture to leave the area, causing the indignant Aresurei to shout.

“That rudeness is an insult to father, don’t let them escape.”

I immediately issued instructions to Lionel and the others.

“Lionel, Cathy, Kefin, I’ve had it, show them our ability.”

『Yes!』

No matter how stalwart and sturdy the dwarves are, it is all according to others. That does not apply to everyone.

With a swing of Lionel's flame greatsword, the dwarves' shields were dissolved and they were sent flying.

Cathy pierced their four limbs with her rapier.

Kefin was apparently considerably angry, he appeared behind Aresurei and cut off both his arms.

It didn't even take 20 seconds before everything ended.

"Dwarf Kingdom ... wouldn't it be better if such a kingdom is crushed?"

I told Rockwell who was sitting on the throne.

"Wait."

King Rockwell descended from the throne and prostrated on the ground.

"Please save this kingdom."

"I am not a saintly gentleman. Who would lend their strength to a king who can't stop his idiotic son from running wild due to his arrogance?"

This time, I only came because of requests from Dolan and Grand-san.

Moreover, the war situation will also most likely change if you, as the dwarf king, moved to the front lines."

"My body is aged as you can see. It's impossible."

"It seems to be so, given you have to camouflage it with that robe. Furthermore, your son most likely called for me because he wished for a pretext to punish me."

The surroundings were wrapped in silence.

The prostrating King Rockwell trembled and began laughing heartily.

“Kukuku, gahaha. I see, so this is the man who became the S-rank healer ... how did you realise that it was a camouflage?”

“Because of Aresurei’s concern towards you. Rather, not only Aresurei but all the dwarves including Grand-san.”

“... I see, I missed out that point.”

“Well then, please do your best for whatever it is to come.”

When I once again intended to leave, an earth wall appeared. However, Lionel demolished that earth wall in an instant.

“No no, won’t you usually not want to leave after knowing that?”

King Rockwell impatiently spoke to me.

“.....”

“I’m really sorry. I won’t lie anymore and I’ll even pledge to not betray you if you help us.”

“Since the spirits might be able to dispel the pledge right? Furthermore, I’m thinking that it would be better to crush the Dwarf Kingdom who’s trying to pick a fight with the church.”

“... What do you mean?”

“Aren’t there illegal slaves among the slaves?”

“Like a king would manage slaves!”

While thinking that is quite spirited, I still answered even though I was feeling slightly irritated.

“... Humans capable of casting healing magic are those who have joined the Healer’s Guild. Of course, it is not strange to see healers become slaves. However, those who wear those robes are only people from the church headquarters.”

“Explain it to me in an easier to understand manner.”

“The Saint Schull’s Church will not go to war unless they are invaded. In addition, I have not heard any word of them going to war lately. Now, why are 5 healers who should belong in the church headquarters forced to cast healing magic until they suffer from magical power depletion here?”

“Those who know something about it, speak up.” (Rockwell)

That voice contained quite a fair amount of fury.

The next person who spoke was Randall-san.

“With, with all due respect. About a year ago a slave dealer visited us and we were instructed to purchase them.”

“Who did?”

“Guraios-sama, Aresurei-sama and their supporters were the ones who gave the instruction to purchase. However, we were told that the slave purchase was all budgeted by the king.”

“What’s the meaning of this, Rockwell?”

Grand-san glared at King Rockwell as he asked.

“Grand, do not doubt me. I swear to the spirit-sama that I’m innocent.”

《Well, it’s true that he didn’t know.》

《Rockwell is merely a muscle brain after all.》

《He was brainwashed by the slave dealer to use slaves.》

《Idiotic face, it’s alright if you rip them off a lot, please help just this one time.》

《There will be countless others as well but we’ll also be troubled if the dwarf race disappears.》

《If this place disappears, Rockford will be in danger next time.》

To be able to hear the voices of the spirits here, I could tell that the spirits value their followers ...

“What if I withdrew from here?” (Luciel)

《Um~ Rockwell might be able to survive but everyone else will be annihilated.》

《There a high chance that Rockwell would die as well.》

《Once that happens, the underground will collapse.》

《Idiotic face, this time, it all rests on your magnanimity.》

《Rockwell will properly pay you for the compensation.》

《Everyone apart from Rockwell is weaker than Luciel so please.》

“Can King Rockwell and the other dwarves hear this too?”

《Yes.》

“I have 5 conditions to save this kingdom. Transfer of the specified slaves, transfer of the magic stones from the monsters defeated here, Rockwell’s personal oath of allegiance to not betray me for a lifetime, thorough disciplining of his sons and Dolan’s pardon.”

The spirits disappeared after hearing that.

Lionel and the other 2 looked at me with dubious expressions but the dwarves all looked at me with astonished expressions.

“Gahaha, interesting. Alright, in exchange, add in the treatment of these guys here as well.”

“ ... Fine. From now onward, King Rockwell will be affiliated with me. Swear to the Earth Spirits that you will spare no effort to wipe out the underground monsters.”

“As long as the Dwarf Kingdom is led by me, I swear to the Earth Spirit-samas that we are affiliated under Luciel-dono.”

Thus, we formed a coalition with the dwarves and head to battle with the ants.

CHAPTER 115

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

As promised, I treated the injuries suffered by the people in the room ... though, I left any previous disabilities untreated.

“Thank you.” (Rockwell)

“Don’t mention it, since I’ll be receiving an additional fee for it. Well then, let us go to the battlefield. Of course, King Rockwell, I’ll have you participate in the battle too.” (Luciel)

“Ooo! Now you’re speaking my language.” (Rockwell)

“ ... Please do so without plunging into the enemy lines.” (Luciel)

“ ... Understood.” (Rockwell)

While thinking that he’s under the category of people that would be dangerous to mingle with, with his figure of going ‘hmpf’ while averting his face resembling someone else, I headed outside. *(TL: Broad did the same thing. Tsundere mode lol.)*

“Then, shall we go immediately? Let us immediately go and defeat the ants while spacing some breaks in between.” (Luciel)

“If that’s the case, I’ll leave the command of the slaves to you. I am unable to command any people apart from dwarves.” (Rockwell)

“Alright.” (Luciel)

As we, Grand-san, King Rockwell and his entourage walked down the corridor, we headed toward the slave room.

Not only is it better to boost our combat strength even by a little, I can also get Cathy and Kefin to investigate the matter regarding the slaves.

It’s unfortunate for those slaves that have been brainwashed or those in line to be brainwashed but I judged that it was unreasonable to take any further risks. *(TL: Risks as in to not take the slaves along causing them greater risk in battle.)*

“Then, I’ll have the slaves that have already been treated placed under my command.” (Luciel)

“ ... The reason you were late was ...” (Rockwell)

“I’ve already finished treating those in the front lines and the wounded in the clinic at the front line. Although, I regret doing so as it exposed Kefin to danger ...” (Luciel)

“You sure trust your slaves.” (Rockwell)

“They may have the standing of slaves but I’m willing to dispel their slave contracts any time they wish for it. It’s just that my slaves all stubbornly wish to remain as slaves.” (Luciel)

“ ... Why do you wish to release slaves who have such high capabilities?” (Rockwell)

“ ... Because there isn’t anyone who wishes to be a slave.

Apart from criminal slaves and war slaves, it is not within my morals to oppress slaves just because of their standing as slaves.

I don’t want to see slaves give up on living just because of their standing as slaves.

Which is why I release those who have committed their all for my sake.

If you have to ask why, I guess it’s for the sake of self-satisfaction.” (Luciel)

“ ... Is that normal among humans?” (Rockwell)

“No, it’s without a doubt unorthodox. However, there’s no reason why I should conform with the human race for this matter right?” (Luciel)

“ ... I see.” (Rockwell)

“Incidentally, do you know who the slaves are under the command of?” (Luciel)

“ ... I don’t know ... is there anyone who knows?” (Rockwell)

“Yes. I know. Most of the slaves are under Aresurei while a small number are under my command.” (Guraios)

Guraios was the one who replied.

He could convey his message across exquisitely in this situation ... but his way of speech gave me a sense of incompatibility with what I recall.

“King Rockwell, will you leave the slaves to me?” (Luciel)

“ ... Alright.” (Rockwell)

“Understood. Everyone, please wait in front of the room for a while. I’ll get them to come with me.” (Luciel)

“Alright. Make it quick.” (Rockwell)

I entered the room where I healed the slaves.

When I entered, the slaves' tension abated.

While feeling that this is not too bad if it is the compensation for healing them, I spoke.

"My enslaved gentlemen! You will all be placed under my command from now on.

I will promise you three things. I will not sacrifice you. I will heal you. I will give you time to rest. These are my three promises."

Unrest spread among the slaves. I was able to see many faces of despair as, in the end, they were still forced to join the battle.

"If you guys swear that you will do your best, I will temporarily cancel your slave contracts here.

If you lie to or betray me, my retinue and the Dwarf King, we will make you launch a suicide attack at the ant's nest.

Also, of course, I approve of retreating when it is impossible to fight but if you flee, we will also make you launch a suicide attack.

If you men swear to the above, I will begin the previously mentioned 3 promises as well as the temporary release of the slave contract.

It is alright to refuse if you find it disagreeable. If you choose to do so, I will by no means involve myself with you.

Well then, you will be under my command if you swear to the Gods the contents I just mentioned, what's your choice?"

After I said that, the slaves exchanged glances and checked each other out but then, a voice called out.

"Luciel-sama, I swear to God."

A woman with visibly poor complexion somehow stood up and said to me.

That woman was one of the women who was sleeping due to magical power depletion.

"I, I swear."

This time, it was a man wearing the Healer's Guild Headquarters' robe.

"I have some things I intend to ask you 2 about but I'll ask it later ... very well."

I approached the 2 of them and their slave crests disappeared when I activated 「Dispel」 .

Immediately after casting 「Dispel」 , another light shone but the impact of the slave crest disappearing was so strong to the slaves that they came forward with their pledges one after another.

“Now, inform my 3 retainers your name, special abilities, and spells. I’ll be setting up temporary parties later so please do not lie about it.”

After announcing that, the remaining 3 who were still sleeping also woke up and I pressed them if they would swear or not. *(TL: There were 5 healers sleeping on beds)*

Naturally, the 3 of them pledged as well.

“Very well. The 5 of you, I’ll listen to your story once everything is over. I leave the casting of 「Area Barrier」 and first aid to you all. As long as you don’t die, I will definitely help so please thoroughly do what you can. I know that you all won’t immediately fall back into magical power depletion so please do what you are capable of.”

『Yes!』

The 5 of them properly replied.

I also considered that they might resent me but I felt relieved that there wasn’t anyone among them who gave out such an atmosphere as I finished casting 「Dispel」 on those who applied.

Regardless if it is only temporary, there are those who felt an eruption of emotions due to the dispelling of their slave crests but naturally, there were some among them who went overboard as well.

“Idiot, who would keep a verbal promise ... what, my body is moving on its own ... what did you do to me ... damn it!”

The man who said that might have intended to take me as a hostage but his body released a red glow and he opened the door to the slave room and burst out running.

“I’ve said so earlier but do not think lightly of your pledge to the Gods, or else you will conduct a solitary suicide mission to the ant’s nest like him, think about it carefully.”

“Er, erm, what happens when we reach magical power depletion?”

“I’ll have you retreat from the front lines and rest. I’ll heal you if you suffered any injuries. I exercise the right to command you all so please follow my instructions.”

“Ye, yes!”

“Please decide your own fate. I will not coerce you.”

After I said that, excluding the 5 healers, 15 people, 60% of the remaining 25 people, agreed.

“Well then, everyone who made the pledges will belong to my squad. Please follow me.”

I saw the slave who did the suicide attack off from beginning to end but I decided not to let it bother me.

However, while noticing the complexion of a person become extremely bad, I spoke to King Rockwell.

“I will only borrow these people. Please order the other slaves and the dwarf race to prevent the ants from entering the Dwarf Kingdom. It’s enough for only King Rockwell and Grand-san to go to the forefront. The others are unnecessary.”

“ ... Is that so? Alright.”

The peanut gallery became noisy when King Rockwell nodded.

“If that’s the case, you can come along to the forefront but you will be responsible for protecting yourself.”

Just after I announced that, the place was once again wrapped in silence.

However, I felt like I heard a small sigh from King Rockwell.

Once we left the temple, we headed to the place where there were the most ant monsters.

“Cathy, Kefin, I leave guiding the way to the 2 of you.”

『Yes!』

“By the way, King Rockwell, what is your weapon?”

“My body itself is my weapon.”

He had gauntlets equipped but they were not ordinary items.

“Those are?”

“My weapons, made from Adamantite and diamond.”

“So you use that to attack?”

“I won’t be able to win against distant foes if I do so. Which is why I use them as an extension to create things such as the earth wall previously.”

“What about cladding yourself with a golem?”

“I’ve done that when I was a child. However, I could not keep up with the magical power control so I ended up with magical power depletion half way through. I sealed that method after that.”

“You’re able to defeat the ants right?”

“As long as I’m not surrounded, I can take on any number of them.”

While thinking that it won’t be a problem if we spread out the locations where Grand-san and King Rockwell do combat as we plunged into the burrow, we headed toward the location where Lionel was fighting previously.

“It’s King Rockwell.”

Similar voices were beginning to be transmitted among the front line soldiers. Deciding that there’s a need to get a description of the current situation from the surrounding dwarves, I asked Lionel to handle the ants on his own for a couple of minutes and he dashed out looking delighted.

Looking at the situation, King Rockwell spoke before we arrived at the forefront.

“From now on, we will defend the Dwarf Kingdom as we cut into the enemy lines. Men, defend your given areas.

Also, these ex-slaves have been returned to regular citizen status by Saint Schull’s Church S-rank healer so do not command them.”

I seek your cooperation. Now, I will enter the front line as well. S-rank healer Luciel-dono will take command here. Everyone, obey his words as if they are my own.”

King Rockwell happily ran up next to Lionel who was swinging his greatsword and began crushing the ants.

The ant monsters were crushed under the overwhelming power of the 2 battle maniacs.

The soldiers who saw that were stunned with their mouths wide open one after the other but I slowly walked to the front row before I turned around and clapped my hands.

The next instant, all attention was gathered on me all at once.

“I’ll briefly explain the things to be done from now on.

I will allocate teams such as the monster defeating team responsible for defeating the majority of the monsters, defence team, mapping team, sanitation team and food team.

The 2 of them there currently fighting are the defence team leaders.

My retainer, the cat beastwoman Cathy will be the leader of the monster defeating team and will enter the burrow.

Following that, similarly, my retainer, Kefin, will be the leader for the mapping team who will confirm the situation of the burrow as Cathy’s team progresses.”

The dwarves were extremely bewildered.

Regardless of it being decided by the king, it’s natural that they would be perplexed by me suddenly speaking up.

“I will be in charge of the food and sanitation but I would like help from dwarves who are not proficient in combat.

As for dwarves that can fight, I would like you all to seize the holes where the ants are appearing little by little from.

The reason why would be that there is a high possibility that this is just a diversion and I would like to entrust the true role of protecting the Dwarf Kingdom to you dwarves.

I have already received compensation from King Rockwell for the treatment of injuries so push forward without fear of injuries.”

“Stalwart and robust warriors of the Earth, cooperate with us to win back the Dwarf Kingdom’s peace and taste the sweet nectar of victory.” (Luciel)

『Ooo~』

The ex-slaves cried out but there weren’t any voices from the dwarves.

“What is it that you wish to protect? Pride? Or is it country? Or family? Luciel-sama is willing to help because I asked him to. Race and such does not matter. True stalwart and robust warrior of the Earth, let us win back peace for the Dwarf Kingdom and enjoy the sweet nectar of victory!” (Grand)

『Oooo~~!』

... As expected, it can't be helped that Grand-san is more popular but I still felt slightly desolate.

While spitting out a sigh, I looked at the back of Grand-san taking hold of all the good parts and the psyched up dwarves. I guess this is fine as well.

I switched thought process and trembled slightly at the thought that the curtains to the battle have finally been drawn.

Is this fear? Or am I trembling from excitement? Without knowing the answer myself, I naturally firmly pledged to my heart that I would not let anyone die.

CHAPTER 116

WATCHING THE BASE

The combat-profession dwarves scattered toward the points where the ant monsters were attacking from.

With that, since there weren't any non-combat profession dwarves around, only King Rockwell's entourage remained.

"Cathy, Kefin, immediately pull out if it gets dangerous. We can review our strategy after that."

After seeing the dwarves scatter off, I began giving out instructions.

『Yes!』

I passed the 2 of them flashlights just in case.

"Fellow slaves, follow their instructions without fail. Because if not, you'll suffer from the difficult situation of charging alone into the ant's nest."

"He, hey, are you not going to hand us weapons?"

"As might be expected, it would be impossible with just bare hands."

Two men from among the slaves spoke out.

"Name?"

"Mapouro"

"I'm Jabron."

I confirmed the contents of the reports on them but apart from having an aptitude to magic, there wasn't a single word regarding weapons.

"In the first place, if your main attack is magic then there's no need for weapons right? Furthermore, these 2 are more capable than what you gentlemen assume. As long as you all do not consider doing anything stupid, you will be able to return properly." I admonished them.

“Let’s quickly make a move nya.”

“I won’t cause Luciel-sama any trouble.”

Once Cathy and Kefin begin walking after saying that, the slaves begin walking in droves.

“Don’t forget that from now on you guys’ lives hinges on the report by the 2 of them.”

After announcing that, their movements suddenly became livelier and they passed through the location where Lionel and the others were fighting.

“Lionel, King Rockwell, I wish for you 2 to remain on standby.”

After I said that, the 2 of them looked spiritlessly at the cave Cathy and the others disappeared into as they buried their enemies.

That’s how we began house-watching this forward base.

“Well then, entourages of King Rockwell, where are the non-combat profession citizens?”

“ ... They are at the king’s abode.”

“Then, please lead me there.”

“What do you intend to do!”

The entourages of King Rockwell glared at me as they felt concern for their non-combat profession fellows.

“I plan to have them help me with cooking. Since stress will accumulate if people go hungry.”

I answered with a smile while Grand-san once again threw in words of persuasion toward the entourage that had slightly retracted their poisonous air.

“Luciel-dono is fundamentally kind. It’s just that lately he’s a little severe towards those that antagonize him. He won’t do anything bad.”

“ ... If Grand-sama says so.”

Several of the entourage began walking toward the king's abode.

" ... I somehow feel like you've been trying to appeal to me since a while ago?"

With a smile, I asked Grand-san who was currently holding all the good parts.

"What are you saying? Anybody would think that you won't know about the fact that I hold such a degree of authority over the dwarf race after you commented that you were disappointed in me."

Grand-san averted his gaze as he replied.

" ... I know about your authority. However, taking into consideration the fact that I didn't know about the contents of the letter, King Rockwell's attitude as well as the incident that happened here, it's no wonder that I felt like I've been plotted against right?"

" ... Although I knew that he was the king's son, I didn't know that he would be so feeble-minded."

I guess Grand-san really wasn't aware of it. However, thinking that it would be better if the dwarves, including King Rockwell, improved on their attitudes, I continued on while incorporating some precautionary words.

"You know, everyone except King Rockwell would have died if Kefin seriously made a move? Well, it can't be helped that Kefin didn't unsheathe his sword."

" ... You sure have confidence in him."

Grand-san was instantly at a loss from hearing my words and replied as he closed his eyes.

That lost expression on Grand-san's face was somewhat painful to see.

Which was why I frankly communicated my feelings regarding Lionel, Cathy and Kefin toward Grand-san.

"I believe that the possibility for Lionel or Cathy to become my enemy is not zero, similarly for Kefin. Even so, if they were not around, I believe that I would have died a long time ago. They may think that I am their life's saviour, but the reverse is also true, they are also my life's saviour."

“Is that so? However, even though slaves normally wish to be released ... why is it that they opt to remain as slaves?”

Since Grand-san had a serious expression on after he once again opened his eyes, I chose to reply his properly.

“I am able to make a guess but I have not asked them directly. I do not intend to ask them in the future either.”

“ ... You don’t have the desire to know?”

“No, I don’t. I will listen if they want me to and I will worry about it together with them. But that’s it.”

“ ... Why?”

“I feel that they don’t talk to me about it because they can’t justify it themselves. Which is why I am open to discussing it with them whenever the time comes and I intend to immediately dispel their slave contracts if they ask me to do so. Though it is attached with the condition that as long as there is no imminent danger to my life.” I said and laughed.

“You won’t regret it?” Grand-san asked with an honest expression.

“I won’t. But the real test begins when everything hits a brick wall. A perfect person doesn’t exist and I am an average person. Moreover, even somebody like Sir Rainstar regrets his failures.”

“You’ve sure grown a great deal stronger just in a couple of years.”

Grand-san narrowed his eyes and nodded.

I was slightly happy to hear those words.

No matter what cheat a person holds or what ability they possess, humans will face failure.

When a large wall suddenly appears in front of your eyes, is there really just 2 options, to give up or to overcome it?

I believe what’s most important is the mentality to think of other methods like changing your conceptions and break down the wall or circumventing the wall.

When competing with a major company, even if you lose out in initial cost and running cost, you can still compete if you can match other needs, instead of sticking to competing with price in particular.

In sales, it can be product knowledge, as long as you've properly researched on what the customer wants the most and propose it, it might not even matter if it is slightly pricier.

Of course, it is also a fact that not everything will go according to plan.

Nevertheless, if you give up at every step, then that would be the end.

"It may take a long period of time to bounce back once I regret it. Even so, time continues to flow regardless, so I will move forward little-by-little doing what I can on a daily basis."

"... For us dwarves, this may be the time we must press onward."

Grand-san's mutterings didn't reach my ears.

Just as we reached a pause in our conversation, the 5 released healers came into sight.

They were all afraid but, although I could understand it was due to them being in a dimly lit cave, I didn't spend time on that matter. Normally, healers do not go to places where monsters appear. Not to mention a dim cavern. I was reminded that it's something mentally straining to healers.

Looking at the 5 of them, I recalled the days I desperately sought after Instructor Broad's training and felt like commending myself.

If I was ever to relive my life here, I would most likely take the same action I did in the town of Meratoni ... ah, I've been caught up in my own train of thought.

"Well then, can the 5 of you healers introduce yourselves for now? Ah, before that, I'll introduce myself. I'm Luciel, S-rank healer returning to the church headquarters from the Ienith branch."

They were not surprised by my self-introduction.

They must have been told by those who knew.

"Then I'll start, former Healer Merrido from Prusta of the Rubruk Kingdom."

“Similarly, former Healer Fanz from Prusta of the Rubruk Kingdom.”

“Naratto from Deresdo of the Elimasia Empire.”

“Similarly, Norman from Deresdo of the Elimasia Empire.”

“Estia from Ebiza of the Saint Schull Allied Nations.”

“Sorry but since it is an emergency situation, I’ll speak in accordance with rank. Is everyone able to use 「Area Barrier」 ?”

『Yes!』

“No.”

“So, the 4 of you, please split yourselves into 2 groups and chant 「Area Barrier」 at the places where the dwarves are gathering until you feel like you are about to reach magical power depletion then return.”

“Erm, isn’t it better to heal?”

“The truth is, that is better. However, if the level is low, the number of times you can use the magic is low so please raise your levels.”

“Levels can be raised by doing so?”

The 4 of them gave questioning looks but I affirmed it.

“I believe it will be raised. I’ve experienced it myself countless times. But, it is influenced by your magical power proficiency so please work seriously.”

『Yes!』

They formed pairs according to their affiliations and headed to different locations.

“Well then, you’re not a healer?”

When I spoke to the remaining girl Estia, she quietly nodded and replied.

“I’m a Spirit Magic Swordsman.”

“Spirit Magic Swordsman?”

“Yes. I don’t know about others but that is what my job is.”

“ ... You can use spirit magic?”

“Fufu, yes. Spirit magic consist of light, fire, water, earth, wind, darkness, lightning, ice and wood, 9 attributes and I use magic by asking spirit-san and compensating with magical power.”

Spirit version of Magic Swordsman? If she's similar to Sir Rainstar, perhaps this woman is also strong?

Although the Valkyrie Paladin Corps, Cathy, and Naria are all in the category of being stronger than me ...

“ ... So, what can you do?”

“I can do some healing, support, attack and obstruction magic as well as use a sword and shield.”

“ ... Why did you become a slave?”

“I was abducted onto a slave dealer's carriage when I was on the way to have my meal at rice shop-san after shopping.”

She's completely an illegal slave ... however, are there shops that sell sleeping medications? I questioned myself while the words rice shop-san gave me a sense of incompatibility.

“ ... Rice shop-san?”

“Erm, a place that serves meals.”

“A restaurant huh ... how capable are you in combat?”

Perhaps she's a reincarnated individual ... no, it felt like I was leaping to conclusions but I made sure to be careful as to not say anything careless.

“Probably the best among the slaves?”

“ ... I see.”

I took out my holy silver sword and shield and passed them to Estia.

“Swear to the gods and spirits, I want to hear your declaration to join the battle and not cause any detriment to me, my retinue and the dwarves.”

“ ... I swear.”

“Be my bodyguard for a while.”

“Eh? You’re not going to thrust me into the ant’s nest?”

“You’ll be subjected to attack if you screw up when you enter the cavern now. Since that’s the case, it’s more efficient to prepare food and rest for everyone.”

“

Estia averted her eyes.

I could guess what was going through her mind but, as I was thinking of delegating to her the task of handling the vegetables for Sparkling-kun to wash, the dwarves who went to the king’s abode had returned. *(TL: Sparkling-kun is the magic tool bought from the reincarnated lady/girl’s shop Luciel encountered quite some time ago and produced by her as well.)*

They also brought along non-combat profession dwarf women and children.

Because the group carried along with them the food materials, there were crockeries like giant pots.

“Thank you very much for coming. Cooking will be done close to the battle but I will commit effort to make sure that everyone does not face any dangers. As proof, I will expand a defensive barrier around everyone.”

I announced the fact that I would apply an 「Area Barrier」 to slightly ease their worries and deployed an 「Area Barrier」 .

The dwarves were bewildered at the start but after they realized that they did not feel any pain when their hands and faces were tapped lightly, they began to be in high spirits.

“Everyone, it’s good to be in high spirits but you should be preparing the food.”

Immediately after King Rockwell’s comment, the dwarves promptly began moving and I helped them as I waited for Cathy and Kefin to return.

CHAPTER 117

CORPSES OF THE DISAPPEARED MONSTERS

Cathy, Kefin, and the former slaves returned about when the cooking was done.

When I received their offer of vegetables, I offered them spices in exchange and the dwarf aunties gave shrill cheers.

After that, I discussed cooking with them in full harmony but I found out that Estia completely could not cook so she was totally out of the loop.

I started listening to Cathy and group's report on the situation of the cavern.

"How's the inside like?"

"It proceeded in the direction of the monsters becoming stronger nyan." (Cathy)

"However, because in addition to the large numbers, they do not disappear while leaving only magic stones like in labyrinths. Hence, it was quite hard to proceed with our search." (Kefin)

If that's the case, then we have no choice but to recover the corpses while proceeding?

Even if I assign magic bags to them ... I can't assign magic bags to the slaves.

In other words, there's no other choice but for me to take up the role of recovering the monsters?

If we continue to remain here, the monsters might attack Rockford instead and it would also be disastrous ... that line of thought is valid as well.

No, if we work the former slaves ...

"... What about the former slaves?"

"Unfortunately, it might work if it is above ground but underground it would be suicide and can't be done nya."

"It's not that wide inside. It would be hard to coordinate cooperation with large numbers and I believe it would inversely cause a difficult situation whereby it would be hard to move about."

“ ... I see. Former slaves, after you get your rest, please defend this location to the last man.”

So it's hopeless ... my wish was severed.

Well, even though I could understand from the dark expressions that were on both of their faces.

“Will we return to being slaves?”

“Or will you make us suicide to the ant monster's nest?”

I only demanded one thing from the frightened former slaves.

“As long as you all securely defend this location and the other 2 caves, I promise to not treat you badly.”

“Thank god.”

“We'll absolutely defend this place and win our freedom!”

『Oooo!』

The former slaves were in high spirits but I didn't have an ounce of intention to let the criminal slaves and war slaves loose.

After our meal and rest, we and King Rockwell had our nap.

I left instructions to substitute the dwarves at the respective caves and for them to take their meals.

Thus, after waking from a couple of hours of nap, we begin storming the cave.

“Then, shall we go? Before that, those with nose plugs?”

Lionel and group immediately raised their hands.

King Rockwell and Estia who were unaware of Object X tilted their heads.

“Oh well. This amount of stench can even transform clean air so plug your noses with these.”

I passed nose plugs to everyone.

“Is it really alright for me to not go in as well?”

“I’d be at ease with the defence if Grand-san remains here. Moreover, the Dwarf Kingdom residents feel that way as well. Former slaves, listen to Grand-san’s words! Alright, some nasty smell might float over but please don’t be alarmed.”

“Understood.”

Thus, I stormed into the cavern that I had no intention of entering.

“It’s fine for me to just shine the light like this?” Estia asked me.

“Yeah. Please tell me immediately if you see any places to take note of or where the enemies might appear from when we’re advancing.”

“Understood.”

I asked Estia to play the role of shining the light from the second row.

We advanced with King Rockwell who has great manoeuvrability at the lead, Kefin, Estia, and Cathy lined up in the second row and with me and Lionel at the rear.

“There are many corpses but looking closely, the monsters sure seem small.”

“It certainly seems that way. However, they will gradually increase in size after we enter the branching passage.”

“I think that now monsters will appear as well nya.”

“I leave it to you. We’ll proceed and place Object X at the branching passage.”

After I announced that to Cathy and Kefin, perhaps because their tension was transmitted, King Rockwell and Estia asked.

“Is that Object X bad to such an extent?”

“Furthermore, is it capable of weakening the monsters just by placing it there?”

“It’s just smelly. To the extent that monsters run away from it. It’s even possible to drink it after everything is over. Incidentally, if you waste it, you will receive penalties in accordance with the pledge to the Philosopher-sama.”

“ ... So it’s something like that huh.”

“If that’s the case, why isn’t it widespread?”

“Because one must definitely finish drinking it.”

“ ... That means you ...”

“Of course, I can drink it without any issue.”

Their faces paled a little when I said that with a laugh.

To have that expression before they have a whiff of the smell ... I could immediately tell that they were wondering about how to judge me. Moreover, it's certainly not anything good.

As we advanced through the cavern, the corpses of monsters gradually increased.

I was storing the corpses in my magic bag but then, both Cathy and Kefin began to describe suspicious points in sync.

“Weird nya. There should be more monsters that I dealt the final blow to nya.”

“Certainly. Such a small number is certainly abnormal.”

Both of them said that there should have been more ant monsters that were defeated.

Since neither of them was the type to serve up strange stories, I considered if it was due to the case whereby the corpses disappear after being left for a certain amount of time like in a labyrinth or that the ants carried them back.

“ ... They might have been carried back by the ants. ... Taking that into consideration, there's a possibility that the monsters will become stronger from here onward. If that's the case, I should have come along from the beginning to recover the corpses.”

“Nobody could have known about such a thing. Since Luciel-sama has currently entered such a dangerous cave, you don't need to feel ashamed to anyone.”

Lionel said so and all the members nodded synchronously, causing my body to feel slightly lighter.

“Thank you. Let's do what we can for now.”

Leaving the monsters that come out to the 3 people vanguard, I earnestly concentrated on collecting the corpses and applying purification magic.

When we reached the fork, just as we were about to proceed onward after placing the barrel of Object X to repel the monsters, I stopped temporarily.

“Please wait a moment.”

I prayed to the Gods for which direction to proceed down and let the Illusionary Cane fall on its own, pointing to the opposite direction of where Cathy and the others were heading toward. *(TL: Lol)*

“You may think that it’s childish but this time, please use this route.”

Cathy and Kefin looked at each other and laughed as they agreed.

“It doesn’t matter to me which way we take nya.”

“I am Luciel-sama’s retainer after all.”

“Thank you.”

I told them that with a smile and had thus decided on the direction we would proceed in.

King Rockwell and Estia gave strange looks for that but I ignored it and advanced.

“The number of monsters has increased.”

Just like what King Rockford announced, weak but numerous monsters appeared the way ahead of the right fork we took.

I steadily collected the corpses but the ants reacted to the disappearing corpses.

“Their movements are slightly different from before nya.”

“ ... That’s certainly true.”

As evidence to that (the ants reacting to the missing corpses), Cathy and Kefin seemed like they felt something was out of place.

“Due to the numbers of these ant monsters, they might not have enough food to go around. If monsters eat as well, then with cannibalism, it would not be strange if they are individuals who become even stronger by doing so.” (Lionel)

“ ... It doesn’t look like this is a place where the corpses disappear like in a labyrinth.” (Luciel)

Lionel looked like he recalled some discomfort from the words I said.

“Perhaps the monsters will become stronger from here on out so advance while maintaining vigilance.”

『Yes!』

While saying so, they discovered that there was another fork in the passage once again and I, in the same way, placed Object X and used the Illusionary Cane to decide on the path to proceed on.

“The passage is gradually widening.”

Estia suddenly said so. It certainly feels like the width of the passage has widened.

“It seems like the enemy numbers have increased as well.”

King Rockwell announced and the 3 vanguards rushed forward.

“It doesn’t look like there will be an attack from behind but monsters may gradually head toward here from the different passages.” Lionel informed me.

“Why do you think so?”

“For an organization that protects the king and queen, it’s the norm. The monsters in labyrinths don’t seem to be related between floors but I’ve heard that ordinary monsters have a pecking order.”

“Your source of information?”

“The Jasuan-Jais brothers.”

I couldn’t imagine when he collected the information without me realizing.

While feeling relieved that Lionel did not waste his time in the town of Ienith, I was once again impressed by Lionel’s greatness to be recognized by the Dragonewt race.

“Well then, I’ll continue retrieving.”

When I began collecting the corpses, the ants aimed for me and attacked.

However, the 3 vanguards suppressed the majority of them and the number of monsters that headed my way was not many.

“Even I can take on one or two without a problem.”

I transformed the Illusionary Cane into a sword and cleaved through them.

I pulverised the monster that was attacking from my blind spot with a spear thrust backward.

“Didn’t Whirlwind teach you that it’s taboo to be conceited?” *(TL: Whirlwind = Instructor Broad)*

“It’s because I trust that Lionel would not overlook any danger. But it was slightly scary though ...”

I admit that I do have some complacency that even if I’m injured, as long as I do not die from a single hit, it would somewhat be alright, indeed, it’s true that I was too careless this time but I believed that Lionel would come in to assist if anything happens.

... I was keenly aware that I truly rely on and trust Lionel.

“You plan to die of old age right?” (Lionel)

“Yeah. So please protect me.” (Luciel)

“I’ll do my best.” (Lionel)

When Lionel and I laughed as we head to the front, Estia was trembling.

“Estia, if you’re afraid, shine the light from the back line.

“ ”

As I defeated the ants attacking me, Estia spoke before I could speak.

“The friendship among men sure is great. Ah, this time, it’s a master-slave relationship huh! It looks great.” (Estia)

She wasn’t scared at all.

“Please let me know if you’re tired. I will be your shield or sword anytime.” (Estia)

She illuminated the place with the flashlight while looking pleased.

I acted as if she wasn't present and was determined to conquer the cavern.

Just like that, we proceeded through another 2 forks in the passage and came out to an open location but, the figures of large bipedal ant monsters eating the dead ants could be seen everywhere.

"Is it a higher species?"

"The number is a little large nya."

"We have no way of reading the opponent's ability so it might become a tough battle if they all strike at once."

The bipedal ants were certainly different from the other ant monsters, about the size of goblins, but I didn't feel any pressure from them.

"Lionel."

I passed him his flame greatsword and gave out orders.

"If Lionel can send the monsters flying, Cathy will support Lionel, Kefin will defend me as I collect the corpses and Estia will protect King Rockwell here."

"I can fight as well?" (Rockwell)

"I know, but for some reason, I totally don't feel that this will be such a tough battle. Leave it to us."

King Rockwell reluctantly compromised.

Thus, our battle with the higher monster species began.

CHAPTER 118

ECOLOGY OF ANTS

Until now, we could defeat the individuals we've been fighting with just a single blow. However, we have no idea about the durability of the higher species. For that reason, I thought of judging it with Lionel's single blow but it failed to function as the evaluating criteria.

"... A single blow."

The ants looked like they held antagonistic sentiment toward the foreign body that suddenly entered. However, Lionel readied his large shield and when he plunged his flaming greatsword clearly into their ranks, the higher species' body was cleaved and sent flying and they did not make any other moves.

Or rather, the ants certainly began moving but Cathy and Kefin annihilated them such that they did not interfere with Lionel.

"I can't quite determine the strength of this specimen." (Kefin)

"Let's do what we can here." (Luciel)

"You're right." (Kefin)

As I talked with Kefin, we ran toward the ant corpses that had piled high and I steadily collected them.

Even I was able to defeat the approaching ant monsters with a single blow. The retrieval of the monsters wasn't that unreasonable a job.

However, the higher species left to Kefin weren't so easily defeated. Although he could subdue them, he could not kill them instantly.

"Kefin, are you alright?"

"Their endurance sure is high. They indirectly also firmly defend themselves ... Luciel-sama, I'll create a gap so could I trouble you to cut them down with that sword?"

As might be expected, I was slightly puzzled but I still immediately agreed.

“ ... Please teach me the timing.”

“Understood. Then, please follow my timing when I hit them.”

“Roger that.”

I matched Kefin’s timing.

When Kefin hit the higher species, I slashed at it when I peaked an opportunity and I was able to easily slice through it while feeling just a slight bit of resistance.

“As expected, Luciel-sama’s equipment is slightly over-the-top.”

“I think so too. Well then, I’ll collect the monster corpses until another higher species come attacking.”

“Yes!”

Kefin and I cleared the mountain pile in order, one pile at a time.

“ ... There isn’t much meaning for us to be here.” (Estia)

“ ... Thanks to them moving violently over there, none of the monsters are coming to attack us.” (Rockwell)

“At any rate, aren’t they way too strong?” (Estia)

Swinging his flaming greatsword, Lionel sent all of them flying altogether, regardless of ordinary species or higher species.

Cathy was using a hit and run technique, maintaining a constant distance as if doing a dance while sequentially guiding the monsters during intervals between Lionel’s attacks, making it such that not that much time was spent.

After that, while I was still retrieving the corpses of the ants into my magic bag, I begin wondering what this place was.

Without any subsequent passages opened, there weren’t any other entrances or exits apart from the one we entered by.

“ ... Perhaps, we took the wrong passage?” (Luciel)

“It might be reasonable to think of this place as a food storage.” (Lionel)

“It’s a little too short nya.” (Cathy)

Lionel and Cathy came closer to me to protect me as I was thinking.

“I was certain that a good direction would definitely be pointed to by trying my luck using the falling cane method.” (Luciel)

At that spot, I once again stood the Illusionary Cane and released my hand.

Please guide our way.

“ ... What’s the meaning of this?” (Luciel)

The Illusionary Cane remaining standing without falling over.

“Amazing nya. Perhaps the main culprit is right below us nya.” (Cathy)

“It might not be a bad idea to bet on Luciel-sama’s luck.” (Lionel)

Cathy and Lionel’s words opened my eyes.

“King Rockwell ... please open a cave downward.” (Luciel)

“ ... Alright. Distance yourselves a little.” (Rockwell)

While looking at me with quizzical eyes, King Rockwell who has sworn allegiance to me, placed his hand on the surface and a circular cave was made in the center of the room.

Then, Estia approached and shined the light down, reflecting on wriggling figures of ants not further than 3 meters away.

“I’ll go this time.”

King Rockwell said so and leaped into the cave.

None of us, me, thinking to plan our strategy before going in, Lionel, and the others, had the time to stop him.

“So selfish.”

We chased King Rockwell’s movement forward with our eyes, the ants didn’t make any other movements other than wriggling and he quickly stood up with a single step on the membrane.

The next instant, he looked at us and announced.

“This is the place where the ant monsters are born.”

I want to go back right now.

Is it a luxury to have that thought right now?

As I asked myself that, I gave out instructions.

“Proceed with the mind that it’s a labyrinth’s boss room. Before that, think of that as the queen ant’s abdomen so to be safe, I’ll apply 「Aura Coat」 and 「Area Barrier」.”

『Yes!』

After I finished casting my magic, Kefin spoke.

“I’ll go in first. After confirming the situation, it may depend on the situation but I can grab that dwarf and retreat while in your field of view.”

“I leave it to you.”

“Confirm the width of the place and the number of enemies too nya.”

“Understood.”

Kefin descended and in an instant, came back.

“What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

I was shocked at why he returned instantly and Kefin immediately replied with the situation below.

“ ... It is without a doubt the spawning site of the ants. Rather than that, the place King Rockwell is currently on is the back of the queen ant. The cave is narrow and it can’t move but there’s no mistake that tons of monsters are being born.”

A single queen ant can give birth to these many monsters? Apart from that threat, it doesn’t seem dangerous.

Assuming that is where countless ants are endlessly being born ... if we leave it unattended now, mankind will be exposed to danger.

Thinking back, because of Sir Rainstar’s action making it such that a labyrinth would not form, it swayed the outcome to this. However, he wouldn’t have been able to imagine that the good intentions he executed would turn into danger 300 years in the future. *(TL: I’m super lost about this part. I’m guessing that Rainstar constructed Rockford and made a pact with the Earth Spirits to make it such that a labyrinth would*

not form to keep the town safe. May be the reason why there is an Earth Dragon but no labyrinth.)

“ ... I'll assume that is the queen. We don't know if they evolve via cannibalism but if we do not defeat it today, the world would be overrun by ant monsters.”

“Shall we puncture the abdomen at one go? Or do we aim for the head or its nucleus the magic stone?”

“We'll divide it. The monsters might appear if we rush over to the head. I'll leave the current location to King Rockwell, Kefin and I will aim for the magic stone while I leave the head portion to the 2 of you. Estia will be the flashlight personnel and pair with King Rockwell.”

『Yes!』

It's too dangerous as I can't trust King Rockwell and I have absolutely no idea on Estia's capability.

I'll have to get Kefin and the others to investigate that later.

Those thoughts passed through my mind. However, there wasn't much time so we quickly began our operation.

After a deep breath and leaping down, the ant's back was a lot softer than I imagined.

... I could immediately verify the ant's size, I calculated that its total length exceeded 25 meters.

It felt wider than a 25-meter pool when I descended onto its back.

“Is it even possible to defeat this?” (Luciel)

“Everything is possible if you set your sights to it, but various monsters will be hatching forth so we have no choice but to defeat it in one shot and continue defeating the others.” (Lionel)

“We have no choice but to do it nya.” (Cathy)

“Let's go.” (Kefin)

“Ha~. Alright, good luck.” (Luciel)

『Yes!』

Thus, we began running forward.

Incidentally, I left it to Estia to explain everything to King Rockwell.

I channeled magical power into my Illusionary Sword and under Kefin's guidance, moved toward the location where the ant's magic stones are located and deeply pierced it with my Holy Dragon Spear.

If this was a labyrinth, this queen ant would have raised its death throes and finally transformed into a magic stone.

But, reality is not so kind after all.

The ants within the queen ant's body began eating from the inside and others from the caves leading into this room began flocking toward the queen ant's corpse.

Although the queen ant is dead, possibly because there were ants inside, I could not store it inside the magic bag.

"Even though I've collected the core magic stone, I don't know how many specimens would transform into higher species after eating the queen ant. King Rockwell will blockage the room by caving the passages in, Lionel, chop the queen ant up. The others will be supports."

I ran toward Lionel's direction without listening to the replies.

The next instant, Lionel beheaded the queen ant.

I sliced the incoming ant monsters as I collected the head.

Even if I'm surrounded, as long as I chant 「High Heal」, I won't die unless it's an instantaneous death.

I collected the corpses during the time between Lionel's circular slices while Cathy, Kefin, and I continued to defeat the monsters at the places where they were becoming active.

If their equipment was complete, would we have finished much more easily?

Even though that crossed my mind, the only thing we could do now was to do our best and I finally collected the whole body of the queen ant into my magic bag. It took roughly about 30 minutes?

After that, we continued cutting up the endless ant monsters but other than Kefin getting to the verge of death due to his weapon breaking countless times, nobody else was injured.

In addition, I heightened my vigilance toward Estia who had combat strength that surpassed Kefin.

CHAPTER 119

MASTERMIND OF THE THREAT

Among our 5 magic bags, 3 of them had reached their storage limit. They were all completely packed with the corpses of the ant monsters.

Taking that into consideration, you could imagine the unimaginable number we had annihilated.

All the monsters were defeated with a single strike thanks to our equipment and my outstanding retinue.

In the first place, why were we stuck in this position?

My anger welled up against King Rockwell beside me who looked like he was about to die with his pale complexion.

“Have the dwarves deal with the remaining monsters.”

I told King Rockwell.

“ ... I know. I'll give the orders when we return.”

As expected, he was reflecting on his actions as visible from his expression and his words.

Aside from that, I could also tell that he could not agree to the fact that he was the only one among us that looked like he was about to collapse.

Though due to him being the only person who does not have 「Aura Coat」 applied on him, he could no longer remain standing due to miasma intoxication.

Then, Lionel and Cathy raised the issue with the Dwarf Kingdom.

“If the problem with the Dwarf Kingdom is not properly dealt with, the root of evil will remain.”

“Eventually, if those 2 people continue on to lead the Dwarf Kingdom, I feel like there would not be a future for the Dwarf Kingdom nya.”

I nodded to that and told King Rockwell.

“As you have it, in the future, I would like it if you stop entangling us in these kind of situations?”

King Rockwell bit his lips and kept silent.

Reluctantly, I spoke to Estia.

“Estia, you’re considerably strong.”

“This is all due to the strength borrowed from the Spirits.”

“I see ...”

For some reason, when I look at Estia, I get a sense of repulsion?

I have no idea if it is because I don’t trust her or if it is because of something else. *(TL: It’s because she’s a fujoshi xD)*

As expected, I don’t intend to continue staying down here so I looked toward the hole in the ceiling for our way back just to realise that the height was roughly about 10 meters.

“ ... It sure isn’t a distance we can cover by leaping.”

Just as I thought of casting 「Dispel」 on King Rockwell, Lionel spoke to me.

“Luciel-sama, I remember that you have a rope with you?”

“Yeah. You need it?”

I took out the rope and passed it to Cathy instead of Lionel.

Because Cathy had her hand out.

“Cathy, remember to check your surroundings.” (Lionel)

“Yes nya. Lionel-sama.”

The next instant, Cathy rode on the flat side of Lionel’s greatsword that was not clad in flames and Lionel swung her upward.

Cathy kicked off the flat side of the greatsword and crossed the distance to the hole in the ceiling.

“I’ll go too.”

Lionel nodded when Kefin said so and with similar actions, Kefin also disappeared from the cave. At the same time, the rope descended down.

“Ah, that was fast. King Rockwell, can you move?” (Luciel)

“Are you sure you want me to go first?” (Rockwell)

“Yeah. You are aware that your head and your torso would separate if you try to do something like confining us down here right?” (Luciel)

“Hmph, I’ve heard that you are naive but you aren’t that naive.” (Rockwell)

“It’s because those around me are excellent.” (Luciel)

With my smile, he turned his face away and climbed up.

“After he reaches the top, we’ll go with the order of Estia, Lionel and then me.” (Luciel)

“I cannot accept the decision to allow Luciel-sama to be the last person.” (Lionel)

“There’s a reasoning behind it. In the event that I’m confined down here or the monsters appear, Lionel and the others will come to my rescue right?” (Luciel)

When I jokingly said that, Lionel reluctantly acknowledged.

After Estia and Lionel had gone up, the rope was raised with amazing momentum when I placed my hand on the rope.

“Ku.”

I firmly grasped onto the rope but I was thrown out into the air at the same time as I felt the pain in my shoulder from that extraordinary pull.

And then the spectacle I saw below was that of the subordinate dwarves that were King Rockwell’s entourage, the former slaves who refused my invitation as well as the figures of the injured Cathy and others and King Rockwell who pulled the rope up.

When I landed, I performed a magic circle chant for 「High Heal」 to cover all the members and restore them in the blink of the eye, causing the dwarves and former slaves to show astonished expressions.

“ ... What’s the situation?” (Luciel)

“At the same time King Rockwell climbed up, these people came and released magic nya.” (Cathy)

“ ... King Rockwell?” (Luciel)

“Really sorry. I will deal with this. Sorry but I’d like to trouble you with the slaves.”
(Rockwell)

King Rockwell’s son Guraios began speaking.

“Father. You’ve become decrepit. I know of the single man that destroyed Rockford a couple of centuries ago. But, 300 long years after that, that monster has never appeared again.

We will kill father and those humans and show everyone that we can govern the human race from underground.”

“ ... Guraios, even you will bare your fangs toward me?”

King Rockwell’s words that he squeezed out caused Guraios’s shoulder to tremble ... and he began to laugh.

“Fufu. I was the one who gradually warped Aresurei. It was as if father did not notice at all.” (Guraios)

“You bastard, from when! Since when did you begin to have such thoughts.” King Rockwell drew closer to Guraios even during his rage.

“It has already been a couple of years. I’ve just been planning to incite the ants a little more to dig out the underground~”(Guraios)

“Don’t tell me, you ...” (Rockwell)

“Yeah. That ant was something I was nurturing. Well, the number became slightly too many and it became troublesome though.” (Guraios)

“Wait a minute. Why are you trying to destroy your own country?”

I could not resist from asking.

“What will come from telling you people who are going to die now? Hey, kill them. I still have something I need father to do for me so don’t kill him.”

When Guraios said so, the dwarves charged and the slaves began weaving their chants.

“Cathy, Kefin, Estia, I leave you all to deal with the slaves. Lionel will be on standby.”

The next instant, Cathy and the other 2 disappeared to nullify the slaves.

I had a single doubt.

The slaves are a separate matter but why do the dwarves not have anxious expressions even though they know of Lionel and the other's ability?

I was only curious about that one thing.

Even though the slaves screamed out in pain with the tendons of their feet and arms pierced, they did not stop chanting.

"I wonder what kind of order has been given to them."

I muttered at the same time as I immediately applied 「Dispel」 on the slaves with magic circle chant. At that point, the attack from the dwarves was incoming.

"Knock them out! I leave it to you, Lionel."

"Understood." Similar to when he was in the audience with the king, he blew the dwarves away.

"Guraios, what have you done to them!" (Rockwell)

"Hmph, since they weren't useful, I made it such that they would be useful."

Even after using 「Recover」 and 「Dispel」, the dwarves could not recover from the miasma.

"Kukuku. It's meaningless no matter what you do. Kill them along with father! Aim for that robed man."

When Guraios asserted so, the dwarves came toward me as if possessed. However, I noticed that the dwarves were somewhat daunted to advance when Lionel swung his flaming greatsword around. When I chanted 「Purification」 from the purification magic just to be certain, they all collapsed one after another.

"Wha, what have you done?" Guraios asked me.

"That's my line. What are you thinking to make your companions into undead."

I bluntly asked Guraios who converted the dwarves of his own race into undead.

“Undead?!” King Rockwell could not hide his surprise.

“Father, what are you so surprised about? These guys are my servants so it’s not a problem no matter what I do to them.”

“Unforgivable, Luciel-dono and members, I request of you all to deal with these people.”

King Rockwell wielded his fist while looking pale but the next instant, the earth swelled up and pierced through Guraios’s stomach.

“ ... You idiot!” (Rockwell) *(TL: King Rockwell was fainting)*

“Eh? Was father always this weak?”

Guraios grinned as he touched the earth blade that pierced his chest and the earth blade crumbled without a trace.

“?! Wha, what?”

“Father, you’re too naive. Is that your full strength ... wha!?”

The next moment, Guraios was wrapped in light.

“I will not forgive those concerning the undead and neither will I question anything.”
(Luciel)

After I thoroughly dealt with the slaves with 「Dispel」 and 「Purification」, I performed 「Sanctuary Circle」 with 「No Chant」.

Then, after the light that wrapped around Guraios stopped, Guraios collapsed on the spot.

After looking at the slaves and confirming that they were still alive, I continued to release them apart from the infiltrators from the Empire.

“Why, why did you not come consult me?”

King Rockwell approached Guraios and touched his body.

“ ... Don’t touch me! Why? Because I resent father. And I will continue to do so even after this, forever.”

Guraios announced as his body crumbled like sand.

“To think that a person who can stop me after I swallowed a magic stone to become a demon exists ... so unlucky.” (Guraios)

Immediately after Guraios disappeared, leaving behind a magic stone, the couple of slaves who infiltrated from the Empire went into convulsions and died.

“Guraios, Guraios — !”

King Rockwell continued to call out Guraios’s name while in tears.

Thus, while leaving behind an ill feeling in my heart, we had removed the threat toward the Dwarf Kingdom and Rockford.

CHAPTER 120

EXISTENCE THAT SPIRITS FEAR

The keepsake of his son ... I purified the magic stone and softly handed it over to King Rockwell.

“I’m worried about the fact that these people could come all the way here. There’s a chance that Grand-san and the others are injured. Let’s quickly return.” I announced to everyone.

At that point, Lionel asked about the treatment regarding the former slaves.

“These slaves, no, former slaves, what should we do with them?”

When I glanced over at the former slaves, the former slaves stared at me with frightened looks while trembling.

“We’ll return first. Former slaves, it doesn’t matter to me if you escape if you intend to. However, I will not guarantee your lives.”

“No, no way.”

“Please save us.”

They clung to us but these men and women were those who did not raise their hands at that time.

Even though they had their chance ... but, if I could have demarcated it like that, it would have been much easier.

As I was having that thought, I pondered about how we should treat the former slaves if they came along with us but rather than that, I was more concerned about Grand-san and the others now so I conveyed my intention to immediately begin moving out.

“King Rockwell. Wouldn’t it be better to mourn after you confirm that your other son is alright?”

“ ... Okay.”

King Rockwell kept the magic stone that was once Guraios close to his bosom, wiped his tears and stood up.

Once I used 「Area High Heal」, the injuries on the former slaves and the dwarves were all completely healed.

“This time, we will cut down anything comes up. We’ll proceed with that intent in mind. Cathy, Kefin, please lead the way.”

『Yes!』

Thus, we aimed for the cave entrance and begin moving.

“There are still monsters here and there huh.”

“But, it’s only a handful nya.”

As the 2 people walking in front exterminated the monsters, they retraced the path we came from.

Along the way, I didn’t forget to retrieve the Object X placed at the branching paths.

The dwarves and King Rockwell were roused and they were following at the tail end of the group.

“The dwarves should be able to defend if this is all that is left right?”

“ ... I guess so.”

King Rockwell maintained his solemn expression and was taciturn.

“However, it looks like it would take a considerable amount of time to dispose of this amount of ant carcasses.”

“Yes. It would be fine to leave it to Paula and Rician regarding the magic stones. Also, won’t the people in Rockford be delighted if we offer them the monsters carcasses?”

“That’s a great idea, Lionel. Well, even if we hold on to the magic stones and carcasses, in terms of utilizing them, it’s both impossible and unnecessary.”

“Yeah. Rather than holding on to them, it’s better to earn the gratitude of the receiving party and should be a more practical way of using it.”

“These magic stones can be used as reserve funds for the former slaves as well though ...”

“Besides, as long as Grand-dono and the others are safe, right?”

While feeling myself naturally tighten the grip I have on the illusionary cane in my hand, we continued to hurry back to the Dwarf Kingdom.

The scene we saw after we exited from the passage was the same cozy atmosphere we saw before we departed.

Moreover, a couple of the dwarves noticed us and looking at their appearance of letting everyone else know that we have returned, I was honestly relieved that I could put an end to my needless worries.

I found Grand-san and approached to speak to him.

“Grand-san, so you’re safe.”

“Yeah. Nothing happened here ... or rather, we were safe since the monsters retreated back into the cave.”

“I see. That’s great but ... Guraios and the others didn’t pass by here?”

“Nope, they didn’t?”

His expression didn’t look like he was lying and Lionel and Cathy shook their heads as well.

“It’s fine if that’s the case. We’ve defeated the queen that gives birth to the ants. Furthermore, we defeated a considerable amount of ants there so once the soldiers from the Dwarf Kingdom defeat the remaining ant monsters, the threat should be completely gone.”

“That’s amazing! Then, are you intending to return to Rockford immediately?”

“I very much wish to do so but treating the injured and getting our treasure takes priority.”

“If there are injured people, I’d like it if you prioritize them first.”

“Yeah.”

I grinned while Grand-san gave a bitter smile.

Perhaps thanks to the emergency food provision, I heard words of gratitude from all sides when we moved to the Dwarf King’s abode.

I found out that the ant monsters also retreated from the remaining 2 caves so I was relieved that it did not fall into the scenario that I was worried about.

When we arrived at the Dwarf King’s abode, King Rockwell walked ahead until the center of the audience hall, stopped, turned around and prostrated on the ground.

“Luciel-dono, please treat Aresurei’s arms. I beg of you!”

Although I’ve treated him to the extent that he would not die, the current Aresurei was in a condition where he did not have both his arms so I could understand where he was coming from.

However, no matter what, I can’t imagine forming a good relationship with them if Aresurei succeeds this country.

“ ... Why do you go so far for him? Forgive my rudeness but isn’t it better for the sake of the Dwarf Kingdom if a person with high ability and clear character is placed as king?”

“It’s a problem prior to the talk about becoming a king or not. He may be an idiotic son but Aresurei is my only heir left. It has no relation to the king’s position.”

“Then, when do you intend to entrust the king’s position to him?”

“ ... After I entrust my whole body and soul to make him a respectable king. If I deem that he does not have the qualification before I pass away, I vow to the Spirits and Gods that I will concede the king’s position to another.”

“ ... Are you serious?”

He was speaking of casting aside the king’s position.

Furthermore, to wager the country’s future, just how does he intend to support Aresurei?

“I have caused such trouble to Luciel-dono and the citizens. It is not something that can be forgiven so easily.”

I saw that his appearance didn’t look like he was lying and I decided to acknowledge it.

Of course, with conditions.

“Very well. Spirits, are you listening?”

“ ... Looks like they would not turn up.”

“Is there some trick set up?”

“No, if there was ...”

King Rockwell didn’t say any further.

But, I noticed his intent.

“Apart from Lionel, Cathy, and Kefin, everyone else are to return to the slave room. Including Estia and the ones related to the church. This is an order.”

I was expecting objections but they obediently ... only Estia didn’t move.

“Hurry up and go nya. Or do you have something to say nya?”

“ ... No.”

I stopped Estia as she was about to leave.

“ ... Estia, leave the magic tool and equipment behind before leaving the room.”

“ ... Understood.”

She left the flashlight, sword, and shield there and exited the room.

Then, King Rockwell made an earth door and made sure nobody could infiltrate.

“Earth Spirit-samas, it’s fine if you don’t show your appearance. Please at least let us hear your voice.”

The moment King Rockwell spoke, the Spirits appeared and began speaking.

《Who was that?》 *(TL: There’s no indication of gender)*

《It was as if it was a shadow.》

《I could sense nothing but the creeps from it.》

《Muscle-brain, Goofy face, that was our natural enemy.》

《Is it alright for us to note the vow you did earlier?》

《Even though the threat to the earth is gone, to think it would be accompanied by a threat to us.》

“I have something I wish to ask. Why did you all not notice the change that was happening to Guraios? It should be possible that it aroused the attention of Spirits right?”

“ ... Is it related to why Spirit-samas didn’t turn up recently?”

King Rockwell interrupted after me.

《It’s not my interest to be manipulated.》

《I took note of Guraios countless times.》

《It approached without us noticing.》

《That is dangerous you know. You should kill it before it gets out of hand.》

《Lately, because of that, we've been afraid of manifesting.》

《That thing swallows us.》

"Who are you referring to?"

King Rockwell asked for its name but it can only be one person.

" ... It should be Estia."

When I said that, Lionel asked.

" ... Luciel-sama, who is this Estia you speak of?"

"I've not heard of that name nya."

"Was she among the former slaves?"

"Why are you all playing dumb with a straight face? She's the Spirit Magic Swordswoman that came along with us to defeat the queen ant."

However, they replied with different reactions from what I had expected.

"Didn't we plunge in with only the 5 people here?"

"That's right nya. Did Luciel-sama see that in your dream nya?"

"Maybe you should take a nap if you are tired?"

The 3 of them ... King Rockwell was also making a strange face so it looked like the 4 of them totally did not remember.

Did something like a memory rewrite happen?

"Spirits, what's the meaning of this?"

《Lapse of memory.》

«Illusion?»

«Darkness-chan's power.»

«It seems like Goofy face possesses power and blessing that counteracts it so it wasn't effective against you.»

«Then it's thanks to us so we're fine with honey or magical power as payment.»

«It's strong so I advise you to be careful.»

“But, didn't you Spirits manifest once at the slave's rest area?”

«That was because we didn't notice that it had become a slave.»

«The pressure that was released when you dispelled it's slave seal was dangerous.»

«It was as if my body was being pulled by it.»

«I'd prefer not to approach it ever again.»

«Be careful and give us honey and magical power again next time.»

«It's also aiming for your life so be careful.»

The Spirits disappeared while leaving ominous words.

King Rockwell gave a look as if words of the Spirits were unbelievable but he immediately decided to believe it.

“I don't know which one is it among the former slaves but it should be the enemy of my soon ... I will take the responsibility to deal with it.”

He looked like he was fired up.

As I relayed the conversation I had with the Spirits to Lionel and the others as well as retell the whole battle with the queen ants, I noticed that the 3 of them felt like there was something out of place.

“To think that we had fallen into a spell without noticing ...”

“Darkness spirits are scary nya.”

“Rather than an illusion, maybe it is more like telepathy?”

While the 3 of them all were feeling depressed, they looked like they were thinking of strategies to not get caught in it.

I once again relayed that to Pope-sama with the magic communication bead and verified if those 5 really belong to the church.

After I made contact and conveyed the information, I was told that it would be investigated and also that the case with the Empire was not drawing near for the time being.

After ending the communication, I made my move.

“King Rockwell, as promised, you have kept your promise but ... first, please remove the earth wall after checking if Estia is not there.”

“Understood.”

King Rockwell nodded and the earth wall collapsed.

“We’ll first force Estia until she is unable to fight. We’ll interrogate her after that.”

『Yes!』

I had considered if she was my fated partner chosen by the Spirits so I was slightly hurt.

It’s true that they did not mention that Estia was my fated partner but for that reason, I was blaming myself for trying to look cool when interacting with her as we moved to the slave resting area.

When we entered the slave resting area, there was no sign of Estia.

I supplemented with investigating if there were unfamiliar faces among them but there weren't any changes apart from the absence of Estia.

" ... Did she notice that her suggestions were not working on me?"

With no choice, I headed toward where Aresurei was and applied 「Extra Heal」 after clearing the room of others.

After confirming that Aresurei had regrown his arms, King Rockwell thanked me.

"No need to thank me. At a later date, Dolan will be coming here so please apologize and pass him the contents of the treasury at that time."

"I understand. So, are you returning immediately?"

"I very much wish to do so but I have to discuss the treatment of the people I removed from slavery and speak with Grand-san once to think of equipment to counter Estia's ability."

"Understood. So you're going to take the former slaves but what do you intend to do?"

" ... I don't want to bring the former slaves along with me to Rockford. Therefore, could I leave them here for the time being?"

"Are you sure that's a good decision?"

"Yeah. There shouldn't be any problems as they can earn their living expenses by suitably defeating the remaining ant monsters here. I will come pick them up as soon as possible."

“ ... Understood. I’ll obey your order.”

King Rockwell acknowledged and we once again moved to the slave’s rest area.

Then, when I contrived an explanation of having to prepare carriages and money, there were some who wished to quickly go out to the surface so I left it up to themselves.

“As long as you pledge to not trouble the dwarves or us, you can freely leave.”

Just by saying that, several people pledged and left the room.

“I leave the meals of the remaining people to you.”

“I know.”

We parted with King Rockwell there and Grand-san was waiting when we left the King’s abode.

“Why didn’t you come in?”

“This is my hometown so there were many things that I was feeling nostalgic about.”

“I see ... well then, let’s head back to Rockford.”

“Yes.”

Thus, we were on our return journey from the Dwarf Kingdom to Rockford.

CHAPTER 121

ESTIA'S PAST

We exited from the cave leading to the Dwarf Kingdom and the vicinity became completely bright and sunny.

“And so, why are you laying in ambush?”

Estia was at the entrance to the cave.

“ ... Do you know me!?”

“Estia right? I suspect “Thank god~” you?!” *(TL: Estia interrupted him mid sentence)*

Estia began to cry loudly.

“ ... Luciel-sama, is this person the Estia you spoke of?”

“ ... She's only a girl nya.”

“ ... Did we originally know her as well?”

As expected, Lionel and the others did not remember anything about Estia at all.

Leaving that aside, couldn't she have escaped without others noticing when she became a slave? It only served to deepen my suspicion toward Estia.

However, she's crying and staying behind ... no, crying can be an act too so I can't ease my attention ... I began speaking with that thought in mind.

“She's Estia without a doubt. Estia, crying will not clear the suspicion on you. Why weren't you together with the former slaves in the slave's resting area?”

“By manifesting the Darkness Spirit's power after a long time, everyone forgot about me ...”

“So?”

“Darkness Spirit-san was angered and tried to attack everyone so I left the place.”

“What did the Darkness Spirit do?”

“Inside the cave? It can't appear unless it becomes night time.”

Sounds plausible ... but, it's way too dangerous and there's not a single merit to bring her along to Rockford.

"Well, since you're no longer a slave, do your best and live."

"Please help me."

Estia's expression was as if she was seriously at her wit's end.

I decided that there might be a chance that I would be cursed if I leave it be so I decided to listen for now.

" ... The other ... the Earth Spirits said that they are afraid of Estia. Could you explain why?"

Mentioning that the Spirits were afraid of Estia ... the instant I said that, her body trembled, she gave a surprised expression, and she once again began crying.

"Even though I just want to get along well with Spirit-sans ... "

Her excuse was that apparently, she does not want to manipulate the Spirits.

However, when she senses danger towards herself, she will unconsciously borrow power from Spirits but the actual fact is that she snatches the Spirits' power without permission huh.

" ... If that's true then you are quite a dangerous existence."

""

She stiffened as she continued casting her eyes downward.

"If you request of the Darkness Spirit, can't you train so that you won't steal the powers?"

" ... I was told that when the time comes, I will be able to control it."

"Told by the spirits?"

"No, by the person who raised me. Darkness Spirit-san gives a sad expression whenever I talk about that ..."

Is it normal to not be able to control it? Or maybe ... the person who raised her huh.

It would be Instructor Broad in my case.

If she's a reincarnated individual, I'm curious as to where she learnt that combat technique from.

"Estia's age?"

"I've turned 17."

... Eh? Did I misread it?

" ... When did you become able to see and speak to Spirits?"

"When I was a child ... in the past, I had a body that was so weak that it would not be strange if I died anytime.

And even now, I can still somewhat remember the time I was sold ... when my parent told me to go to a place where I can get treatment.

I was forced to drink various medicine that was said to be for an experiment, forced to swing the sword even when I had a fever and I was always full of bruises.

Furthermore, I was always lonely.

That continued for a couple of years before one day, I became able to see Darkness Spirit-san.

After that, my body's condition became better."

... Meaning she summoned the Spirits herself? Or was it that she originally had the talent? Or is it the effect of the medicine she was forced to drink ... eh? I directly asked the question that was on my mind.

"Even though you were sold as a slave, isn't it strange to be caught as a slave again?"

"Because I was released from slavery once."

" ... You sure get released often."

"That time, I was surprised when it was easily done when I wished to be released from slavery but it seemed that it was done by Darkness Spirit-san."

" ... It's been on my mind the whole time, did you use a memory lapse magic when you left the king's audience? To not leave a trace of it behind ... furthermore, why didn't the Earth Spirits notice the Darkness Spirit's presence?"

" ... That's because of the price of the power?"

"Price?"

Estia made a gloomy face and continued.

“At the place we fought with the queen ant, my defence instinct flared and I ended up using Spirit-san’s power.

Because I snatched the Spirit-san’s magical power, other than Darkness Spirit-san which is my contracted spirit, the others were resting to regain their power.

Conversely, Darkness Spirit-san became healthy and ended up causing a concealment effect to trickle down to the surroundings.

To explain the price in an easy-to-understand manner, originally, at the time everyone left the cave, I was supposed to disappear from everyone’s memories.

For some reason, it could not interfere with Luciel-sama’s memories.”

Those eyes didn’t look like they were lying.

But, I was unable to measure the trust I have in her.

If there isn’t a threat, there’s the choice of bringing her along to Rockford. However, I could not trust her to that extent.

“I cannot determine if the Darkness Spirit that wanted to save Estia acted wildly or that Estia unconsciously acted wildly.

In a world where there isn’t an exchange of life, it might be alright to think that it’s fine. But, in this world, I can’t immediately bring you along.”

“ ... I guess you’re right. Since you did release me from slavery ... I am thankful for that alone.”

Looking at the forced smile made by Estia, I ended up being distressed about whether my decision was the right one.

I’ll postpone thinking about the right thing to do after getting my hands on more information.

“I will lend this sword and shield to you. Also, I will write to King Rockwell so that you will be able to wait in the Dwarf Kingdom so please wait there.”

“Eh?”

“I don’t intend to do something as thoughtless as abandoning a person who can’t even cook.”

“Thank you. Thank you.”

As Estia conveyed her thanks to me, I took out a parchment from my magic bag and wrote a letter to King Rockwell.

While I wrote the letter, I thought, if the measure and the mindset of spirits differ, won't we be able to understand the Spirit's way of thinking slightly through Estia?

While thinking of her merit if I bring her along, I made it so that we would meet again.

"I plan to return to this land 10 days later. It's alright if you properly live in the Dwarf Kingdom until then."

"Understood. I look forward to meeting you again."

Taking out Fornoir and the others using the Key of the Hermit, when we were about to set off for Rockford, Fornoir approached Estia from the front.

"Wha, what's wrong?"

Estia asked bewilderedly.

"What's wrong Fornoir?"

Fornoir ignored my question as she stopped in front of Estia and looked into her face.

After a dozen of seconds, Estia curtsied.

After that, Fornoir calmly walked back to me but ... (TL: Holy sh*t even his horse is OP lol)

"Did you do something?"

"Burururu."

Fornoir merely shook her neck.

However, Estia was different.

She continued to simply stare at Fornoir as if she was released from her inner demons.

When Lionel straddled his horse, Cathy and the others boarded the carriage and finished their preparation to set off, and I also hopped onto Fornoir, I called out to Estia.

"If you can speak with the Darkness Spirit, it would be better to properly convey how painful it is to you for memories of you to be lost from those around you. There's probably a large difference between the way of thinking of Spirits and human."

"... Understood. I will try asking Darkness Spirit-san."

"See you."

"Be careful."

While being seen off by Estia, we departed for Rockford.

A couple of minutes after departing, Lionel spoke before me.

“That girl was most likely from the Elimasia Empire.”

“Why do you think so?”

“There’s a possibility that she fell ill when she was a child due to a hidden job aptitude that was not suitable for her body.”

“ ... Just a possibility right?”

“Currently, the Empire still collects such children to turn them into the Empire soldiers.”

“ ... Why?”

“Publicly, they claim to treat them but in reality, by turning them into Empire soldiers, they cause them to arouse a sense of resentment toward the other countries they were brought from.”

“You mean by brain-washing?”

“Yes. Because while they are young, they would not realise that they are being brain-washed.”

“ ... Previously, I’ve heard of similar stories in Meratoni but ...”

Botacyl’s daughter’s situation felt that way.

Thinking about that ... what happens to the slaves sold to the Empire?

“Incidentally, what’s the fate of the adult slaves from the other countries sold to the Empire?”

“I can’t generalise all of them but they may flow from country to country, be bought as pets or for children’s training ... there are also rumours of human experimentations.”

“There’s also cases like Lionel’s betrayal right?”

“ ... Yeah, that is true. The darkness in the Empire is more deeply-rooted that you can imagine.”

“However, why do they take in sickly children just based on a possibility?”

“ ... It’s because the Emperor of the Elimasia Empire had the same circumstances. His weak body drastically changed once he reached adulthood and due to the special job he possessed, he climbed up to the seat of emperor all at one go.”

“ ... And what’s the result in the end?”

“I don’t know the exact details but I heard that it gave decent results. If they do not obtain special jobs or advance jobs, I heard that they would once again be sold to other countries ...”

Would they really sell them after they’ve paid so much money to treat them and nurture them?

I decided that I would try asking Estia the next time I met her if I have the chance even though I’m unsure if she would answer.

CHAPTER 122

FUTURE DREAMS AND GOALS

Upon entering the entrance of Rockford, the fake city, I received the scouting report from Cathy that there weren't any irregularities so we entered the interior.

"It would be great if this location wasn't harmed ..."

Lionel said apprehensively but Rockford was completely fine.

That is if not for the traces of destruction in the center of the town, but there wasn't any location where land subsidence occurred.

We could confirm that Paula's golem was moving about in the central square. We moved towards there while feeling relieved.

However, we came upon the situation where there were a large amount of ant corpses remaining in the central square and there was intense fighting due to multiple newly opened holes.

"Everyone, are you alright? We've returned. If there are any injured, I'll heal them immediately."

The moment I called out from outside the square, the 5-meter class golem disappeared and Paula collapsed.

"Paula!?"

Before we could rush over, Dolan supported Paula.

"We're saved. Luciel-sama, please help us plug the holes."

Dolan looked over and conveyed his request.

It was obvious that it would be better to close up the holes since the central square was clearly riddled with holes so I immediately helped.

"Alright then, Lionel and others will exterminate the monsters coming out from the hole. Grand-san, could you cooperate with Dolan to bury the holes together?"

『Yes!』

Grand-san sought permission for the use of the magic stones.

“Luciel-dono, would it be alright if we used the magic stones?”

“Yes. Since it doesn’t appear that it would cost that many, the stones from that mountain-like pile of ants ... no, I acknowledge the use of the magic stones we extracted from the ant monsters we had collected.”

“Understood.”

The filling of the holes didn’t take that much time but perhaps it was because of the fatigue accumulated from defending overnight, it felt like Rician and Dolan, as well as the people participating in the battle in the city were trying their best to remain afoot.

“We will take over this situation so everyone please return home for now, have your meals and rest. Please sound out if there are any wounded individuals.”

After I announced that, a couple of people came over to request for treatment of injuries while the others conveyed their thanks and returned to their respective workshops.

“Dolan, what about your meals?”

“I ate the meal you left for me so I’m alright.”

“I see. What about Toretto-san?”

“Toretto does not have a combat profession so he’s disassembling the monsters.”

He’s most likely extracting magic stones or converting them into items that can be used for protective gear.

“Understood. Please take your time to rest.”

Dolan bowed and returned to his workshop while giving a piggyback ride to Paula.

Rician also left following them.

“Grand-san, please do the measurements for Lionel and the other’s weapons and armors.”

“Luciel-dono is not returning?”

“Yes. I wish to remain here for a while longer to organize my thoughts before returning. Lionel, Cathy and Kefin, you guys can go back as well.”

Grand-san nodded in acknowledgement and chased after Dolan but the 3 others had a discussion and it appeared that it was decided that Lionel would remain by my side.

After watching Cathy and Kefin head toward Dolan's workshop, Lionel spoke to me first.

"We don't think that you would fall into a hole again but just in case."

"... I didn't take into consideration such a thing though ..."

I thought that I would be fine on my own but I felt embarrassed the moment I said that so I turned my gaze to the square.

"It is natural for a person of Luciel-sama's position to have a retainer by his side. You have to get used to it someday."

"Is that so ... but I can't really accustom myself to it."

"You'll get used to it once 10 years passes."

Ten years is a long time and it was hard just trying to think about it.

Was it egotistical of me to think that I would have dispelled Lionel and Cathy's slave contract by then and properly have them as my retinue?

While viewing the square, I talked to Lionel about our plans hereafter.

"I'll ask since this is the opportunity to do so. There might come a time where we have to go to the Empire but would you be alright?"

"... If I would still be in the form of a slave, I believe I would be able to control my feelings. However, if my slave contract is dispelled, to be honest, I find it difficult to answer."

"... I see. The plan hereafter would be to bring along Dolan to the Dwarf Kingdom and after that, go to the Meratoni town. Depending on the situation, I think I'll have to consider going to Saint Schull's church but the problem would be what comes after that."

"Is Luciel-sama able to decide on your own where you would like to go?"

"Yeah, tentatively if nothing crops up. For me, it would be the Independent Magic City Nelldal? I'd like to try going there. I might become capable of using magic and isn't a country floating in mid air amazing?"

“I see. However, if I am correct, the only way to enter that country would be to either ride on the dragon cages of the Empire, climb up the labyrinths in the Labyrinth Nation Grandol or request of the representatives of each country for an invitation from Nelldal right?”

“Really?”

“Yeah. I’ve never been there before but I’ve heard of that a long time ago.”

“I see. Well, I plan to spend a couple of months in Meratoni assembling everybody’s equipment. And return to the basics for a while and get trained by Instructor Broad. Furthermore, I’d like to see the battle between Lionel and Instructor Broad.”

“It feels like it would be endlessly enjoyable with Luciel-sama around.”

Lionel was rejoicing with his eyes shining.

“And so, for Estia’s case, do you really not remember anything?”

“ ... Rather than having lost my memory, it feels more like my memory was diluted.”

“To what extent?”

“As if it was something I heard or didn’t heard of a couple of years ago, like having a vague recollection of it.”

“Did you recall when we met her outside?”

“I felt that I would not have recognized her if I did not look carefully.”

“More of forgetting instead of an illusion or hallucination huh?”

“I felt that there were recognition inhibition and concealment effects intermixed. Because it closely resembles Kefin’s Ninjutsu, I think that I might not forget if I get used to it ...”

“I see ... what do you think about her?”

“ ... If she is an Empire infiltrator, it is plausible that she entered by becoming a slave. However, by managing a person that they can’t recognize, she would not arouse the suspicion of being related to the Empire.”

“It’d be good if we are able to see through her acting but since it involves Spirits, it is unnecessarily bad.”

“It’s true that I don’t see her as a bad person so I won’t stop you if you make her your retainer but vigilance would be necessary in that case.”

“ ... It’s not my own intuition but it’s a mystery why Fornoir didn’t harbor any hostility toward her.”

“Luciel-sama’s horse?”

“Yeah. I’ve heard that animals are multiple times more intuitive compared to humans.

I’ve heard that human’s intuition is decided by their memories but animal’s intuition comes from survival instinct.

Fornoir approached on her own without disliking it. I think that it might be because she didn’t feel any malicious intent.”

“How great would it be if we had a magic tool to speak with animals.”

“To the extent that I would like to seriously have it constructed.”

Just like that, we conversed about various topics, had some light bouts after that and performed some magical power manipulation to kill time.

“This time, we should be able to extract a considerable amount of magic stones from the monster corpses we collected. I wish to use those to aim for the completion of *that*. The priority would go to the equipment first but I’d like Dolan to decide on what to proceed on after that.”

“Understood. Paula will consolidate the magic stones while Rician will assign attributes to the magic stone.”

“ ... Alright ...”

“Then, once we’re done, can we develop new items?”

“Of course. I’ll be helping with the dismantling from tomorrow onward since it seems like it would be a considerable amount of magic stones and will be immense work but work hard.”

Grand-san was surprised when I said that but I ignored it as I made dinner and mandated that everyone go to bed earlier today.

After dinner, I returned to my room and conveyed the facts I newly discovered to the Pope-sama through the magic communication bead.

«... We have not been able to confirm the records. But, I would like you to bring Estia along to Saint Schull's church headquarters.»

"I think that won't be a problem but would it be alright?"

«You've already dispelled the slave crest right? Moreover, since Fornoir didn't exhibit any hostility, there won't be any problems ... and I am curious as well.»

"Understood. I'll return to the church headquarters temporarily before I go to Meratoni."

«I think that it'll be troublesome but please do so.»

"Yes!"

I ended with my reply and cut the communication.

All the darkness is connected to the Empire.

It didn't seem like Lionel is particularly bothered about going there and it's not like we're going there this instant.

We'll have to meet with Estia once more in order to find out more about the details.

Just as I had thought that I was over with it in Ienith, I was embroiled in the Dwarf Kingdom incident, I sure am short of luck lately. It's not to the extent of suffering mentally but I do want to have the occasional opportunity to relax ...

I'm tangled up with the Evil God due to the dragon seals, the Spirits are moving about freely and uncontrolled, and I'm swayed by my retinue's feelings ...

While feeling disappointed that although the blessings have a meaning in some manner, it had resulted in the narrowing my choices, I practiced my routine magical power manipulation and continuous chanting before going to sleep.

The next day onward, everyone was planned to carry out their assigned work be it monster dismantling and magic stone extraction or other work but it also became that Toretto-san would be helping to dismantle.

“To think that Toretto-san would finish dismantling a whole body at the same speed as me extracting a single magic stone, I’ve lost confidence in many different ways.”

Toretto-san laughed and replied to my wry smile.

“There’s no way I would lose to Luciel-kun who’s a novice fledgling to a work that I have done countless times since I was young. If you ever exceed me in this work, I’ll transcend you in sex.”

“ ... I’m alright with not exceeding. I apologize. Please forgive me. Well then, let’s get to work.”

My mental strength was completely destroyed and I replied monotonously while concentrating on the dismantling work.

I was thanked by everyone as I applied purification magic to the dismantling grounds every 30 minutes. Thus, I preoccupied myself with the dismantling work.

While carrying on with the dismantling work, I realised something.

“Rician is capable of using Spirit magic right?”

“Yes. My specialty is Wind Spirit magic.”

“ ... Incidentally, what happens if you use Earth Spirit magic?”

“I’ve never tried it before. But, it should rob me of a considerable amount of magical power. The amount of magical power used depends on the compatibility with the Spirits.”

“I see. By the way, are you able to use Light Spirit magic as well?”

“If you tell me the spell image, I believe I will be able to use it. Since the magic stone attribute bestowal I’m doing now is done by requesting the Spirits after all.”

If that’s the case, it’s no wonder Estia’s magical power was depleted at one go just by using healing magic via Light Spirit magic.

“If Paula and Rician are assembled together, would there be nothing you 2 won’t be able to bestow?”

“There’s no way it would be so convenient. Light and Darkness can’t be done even with a significant amount of magical power, so depending on the case, items might be required for the bestowal of attributes. Something like Holy Water would be required for Darkness magic stones.”

“That sure is troublesome.”

“Yes. That is why I very much look up to Sir Rainstar. To him who possess the aptitude to every attribute, the thought that he would be able to create various kinds of magic stone makes me envious.”

“I see.”

“If it’s Luciel-chan, he’s definitely going to become the Philosopher someday. Why don’t we develop various things together when that time comes?” (Toretto)

“Luciel, I won’t mind getting married to you if that day comes.” (Rician)

“That’s a good idea. I’ll be a candidate too.” (Paula)

“Paula and Rician sure prioritise worldly desires.” (Toretto)

I could only laugh to that.

While inserting in intervals for meal breaks and tea breaks, the dismantling work continued for a long time.

“ ... It sure is hard doing this the whole day.”

“It won’t be easy no matter what job it is.”

“With setbacks, patience, and effort, you’ll finally reach the starting point.”

“Even though it’s not something I like, it isn’t something I can’t do. But, even with the talent, without pride and the passion for creating new things, you won’t last long.”

In my situation, it would be magic practice? Or ... if it is something that I seriously dedicated myself to ... then it would be the 2 years I spent in Meratoni.

Now that I think about it, I couldn’t even afford the time to think during that 2 years time ...

If I was not called to the headquarters, I wonder what would I have become?

“For Luciel it would be helping others?”

Paula asked without batting an eyelid but I could not answer immediately.

The reason was because I realised that it didn’t feel like myself.

“ ... I worked hard and desperately trained in martial arts and Holy attribute magic because I didn’t want to die. Lately, I’ve been thinking that I want to help if there is a life to be helped but it’s not like I’m thinking of saving everyone.”

“It’s natural for you to be uncertain at your age. It’s not to the extent of Luciel-chan but even for me, with my legendary lineage, I have been troubled for decades as to whether to continue down the road of manufacturing or to utilize this technique I have to start new ideas, even now, I’m still mulling over it.”

Even though Toretto-san has been carrying such a burden, he always doesn’t look like he’s troubled.

Nevertheless, to have been troubled for a few decades means, if he is the same as the racoon dog beastman Warabis-san ...

Even without saying anything, I felt like I would have to be prepared to lose something important if I say any further so I switched my thoughts as Paula began talking.

“Magic engineer. My goal is to reach magic tool production level X. The next goal would be to create something better than Master Toretto.”

“Me too, as a pioneer, my goal is to develop new magic tools.”

After Paula, Rician answered proudly as well.

... Because the 2 of them have goals, they are able to push forward?

Why is it that I feel a sense of jealousy when I look at them?

Because they have a goal? Or because they understood it themselves?

“My goal ... huh.”

“Isn’t Luciel-chan’s goal to create a peaceful nation or to make a world where nobody gets hurt?”

“To discover talents?”

“Isn’t it world reformation?”

“Every one of you, I don’t have such lofty aspirations. I only want to not face any danger to my life and devote myself to something ... medicine or magic tool creation may be interesting.”

“You’re still young so it’s fine if you try out various things. However, everything starts out sweet but it’s a fact that most will turn out arduous so you shouldn’t give up okay.”

So even if I think it’s going well, in the end, I would hit a wall but the point lies in what I do when that time comes.

Goals and dreams huh ...

“Luciel as a disciple ... interesting.”

“If it’s Luciel-san, he’ll definitely get tons of magic stones ...”

The 2 of them were once again overflowing with worldly desires.

“That’s right. It’s a bit pitiful to only have dying of old age as my long-term goal.”

After I said that, the instant I thought that Toretto-san disappeared, I was suddenly hugged.

“To think that you were so ill. From now on, come into my world ...”

I had goosebumps all over my body together with the chills but Paula and Rician helped me.

“I will not hand over Luciel.”

“Please don’t entice Luciel-san down your path. Master Toretto will just end up forming a suspicious group.”

“Oh dear, then what would the 2 of you do?”

“I will work hard to develop magic tools until I die.”

“The human race’s lifespan is short so I will be together with Luciel-san until he dies of old age. Since my rival buddy is here as well.”

If somebody else hears that, it would be heard as a reverse marriage proposal though.

“Thank you. For now, I’ll try to think of mid-term goals and dreams.”

It was a full 3 days after before we finished dismantling the enormous amount of ants.

From the next day onward, I began training in parallel magic circle chants.

I would like to quickly set my mid-term goals but I felt that it was likely that I would be confronted by something that I won't be able to recover from if I continue to postpone what I lack.

After Lionel and Cathy's measurements were over and laughing when Toretto-san drew closer to Kefin during his measurement, 10 days passed in the blink of an eye.

"Well then, we'll be departing now, everyone okay?"

"Yes."

Dolan was nervous.

Well, it's natural since he'll be meeting King Rockwell.

"But, are you really going to come along?"

"If grandpa is going along then of course!!"

"To observe the enemy's intentions!"

Most likely he's the enemy because he caused them to become slaves.

Even so, it's really good that these 2 people really get along well.

The 2 of them could establish a relationship most likely because Dolan accepted the elf Rician.

"I've received a new idea as well so I'll keep watch over the workshop."

Toretto-san smiled and made a wink but the target was not me but Lionel, causing Cathy to puff up and bare her wariness.

"It will take roughly about 3 months to complete the equipment for the 3 of them. I'll return the extra ores."

"But didn't you say that you needed the ores?"

"I remembered something important due to the incident this time. After I finish creating the armors, I plan to head to the mine."

"Elder Brother Grand."

“There’s somewhat too many fetters if I work at Luciel-dono’s place like Dolan. Once you all have tidied up everything, will you all be returning?”

“If Grand-san wants to work together, we can purchase a wide piece of land in Ienith and it might be interesting to build a new town.”

“Oh dear, if that’s the case I would also join in. Creating a new town sure makes one tension rise up high fo~.”

“Ten years or more later ... it might be a conversation much further in the future but would it be alright to have such a dream?”

If we would be able to create a haven similar to this Rockford where I won’t encounter much interference, I feel like I might be able to somehow work hard for it.”

Everyone laughed as they gave their approval.

My heart was feeling lighter for some reason after such a long time and while thanking everyone, I aimed to someday actually realise that dream as we head toward the Dwarf Kingdom from Rockford.

CHAPTER 123

DWARF KINGDOM AND SIR RAINSTAR

Monsters didn't appear at all even until we reached the Dwarf Kingdom.

The monsters flying in the sky were too far away and for some reason there were no signs of attacks coming so we proceeded on after reaching the cave.

"There sure aren't any monsters."

"Rather than because we defeated so many of them, that queen ant was most likely the reason after all."

Nodding to Lionel's words, I shine the torchlight onto the dark cave passage and entered.

"Is it alright if we stop for a moment?"

Dolan stopped us just as we were on the verge of passing through the entrance to the Dwarf Kingdom.

"Are you not feeling well?"

"... No, I'm just trembling. Until today, I still can't forget the incident that day where I ended up involving Paula."

"Grandpa..."

Dolan stroked Paula's head as he took a deep breath and hit his face.

"Thanks for waiting. Let's go."

When we reached the Dwarf Kingdom, the dwarves started an uproar when they saw us ... or rather when they saw Dolan and Paula."

"You sure have remarkable popularity."

"Because it's a small country even though it's called a kingdom."

Dolan smiled while looking like he was feeling embarrassed.

We directly headed towards the King's Abode where King Rockwell stayed.

“The previous time we were here, there wasn’t a reception as well but normally is that how it is?”

“We don’t have such formalities. King Rockwell claims that all of the dwarf race are brothers.”

“If that’s the case ...” As I was about to speak, Dolan spoke as if he knew what I wanted to say.

“The sword that I forged was something that would be a problem of responsibility to the Dwarf Kingdom. In order to avoid that, with heartrending grief, I was chosen to fulfill my responsibility by becoming a slave and they definitely made some more compensation in addition to that.” *(TL: The situation that led to Dolan and Paula’s slavery was never clearly stated. My guess is that another kingdom (the Empire) requested of a sword from the Dwarf Kingdom and Dolan was chosen to make it. An earthquake occurred that collapsed Dolan’s workshop and he sacrificed his arms to save Paula so the sword could not be completed and was a failed product. To avoid trouble with the other kingdom, Dolan was sentenced to become a slave. Let me know in the comments if you have any other conjectures :D)*

“Couldn’t the king use his power to pardon you?”

“No, he couldn’t, because we were relatives.”

“Ha?”

“King Rockwell’s father ... the previous generation king was my younger brother.

I had decided to go down the road of blacksmithing and left the house before I reached adulthood.

Then I wandered and continued to train together with elder brother Grand under a master.

After a while, I found out that my father died and my younger brother was to be the next king.”

“Then Dolan and Paula became part of the royal family?”

“That might have happened.”

Dolan nodded and said so while laughing.

As we walked down the passage, we heard a yell.

The yell came from the audience room.

“Was that King Rockwell’s voice?”

“The other party already ...”

Dolan opened the door to the audience room.

“I believe I gave the order to not let anyone enter ... Uncle Dolan?!”

“Even the bean pole Paula is here too?”

As if King Rockwell and Aresurei were not yelling at each other previously, they fixated on Dolan and Paula.

“I purchased the 2 of them from a slave dealer and as they have served me sufficiently, I have released them from slavery. Now, they work as my personnel-in-charge for magic tool development. Well then, King Rockwell. I leave it to you if you want to apologize or not. Dolan, you can speak as well if you have anything you want to say.”

“I don’t know about S-rank healers but aren’t you acting all high and mighty.”

Aresurei targeted and yelled at me but a figure came up from behind Aresurei and covered his mouth.

“You are noisy as always. You’re interfering with Uncle Rockwell and grandpa’s conversation.”

It was Paula’s golem that held down Aresurei.

“Paula-chan, thank you for the help. Uncle Dolan, it’s been a long time.”

“King Rockwell, due to my failure, I’ve caused you trouble that you would originally not need to suffer from. Sorry, I hope you understand.”

Dolan was the one who apologized.

“Uncle, I must apologize to you, I was the one who relied on you for that incident. Uncle, you don’t need to apologize. Furthermore, although Paula also personally asked to be sold together at that time, I should not have permitted it after all.”

“Because you sold me as well, we were together all the time.”

“ ... I had believed that you were a heartless man when you sold Paula but it was the duty of the king of dwarves.

If you have feelings of repentance, discard something like that away.

Rockwell, as a king you should do what must be done.

However, if you personally still feel like apologizing, I accept that apology and forgive everything.”

“ ... Uncle ... I am sincerely sorry for pushing everything onto you.”

King Rockwell was crying.

Aresurei looked like he could not believe his eyes.

Aresurei most likely lived his life without ever seeing Rockwell, a person with such arrogant attitude, cry.

That arrogant attitude must have gradually came to be to show the people around him his confidence as a king.

I wonder what would I have become if I had to face the same heavy pressure and have nobody to help in Ienith?

I would not likely be able to leave Ienith in a single year and it would have taken more time to rebuild the Healer’s Guild.

Thinking about it that way, I felt sympathy towards King Rockwell.

He could not control his subordinates and sons, and although they’ve caused him trouble, the Dwarf Kingdom might have developed in a different path if Dolan and Grand-san were around ... I had such a thought.

“Uu ... u ... uu ... u”

Aresurei flailed his body trying to escape from the golem made by Paula. But, he could not escape.

“ ... King Rockwell, I’ve roughly heard about the incident. If the heir has to be changed ... if after waiting for a couple of years and Aresurei does not change, I will approve of it as well. I will hold half of the responsibility.”

Dolan looked at Aresurei regretfully and announced.

“ ... You think so too after all? Golem control is something that dwarves specialize in. To not be able to disassemble it ... monsters may come attacking again so I’m feeling uneasy.”

“Yeah. If Aresurei does not properly grow up 5 years later, it might be a good idea to hold a selection for the next heir to be the Dwarf King.”

“That may be our only choice.”

King Rockwell paid attention to Dolan as he spoke to him and stared at Aresurei.

“If that can’t be disassembled, then maybe I’m the queen?”

Paula tilted her head as she interrupted King Rockwell and Dolan’s conversation.

Aresurei had fainted from the lack of oxygen.

“Ha~ Pitiful. I’m also pathetic huh? Truthfully, the items inside the treasury have been somehow taken by Aresurei and the others so we’ve lost a lot of things. Uncle Dolan, I leave it up to you to decide what to bring out from there.”

“Dolan, instead of items of value, it is alright to only look for items that we seek, everything else is unnecessary if what we seek isn’t there.”

Leaving the fainted Aresurei there, we moved to the treasury.

The Dwarf Kingdom treasury was immediately after the door behind the throne.

“Are there no locking mechanisms?”

“Magical power recognition is required so normally it can’t be opened. Taking into assumption the unfortunate event that I die, Guraio and Aresurei were configured for recognition as well.”

Well, that might be the natural action.

When King Rockwell touched the door, similar to the doors to the sealed dragons, the door emitted light and a pattern was drawn onto it.

Then, the pattern shone with light in sync with the door opening.

“Who built this door?”

“ ... The human hero Rainstar. The person who caused the decline of the Dwarf Kingdom.”

... That man has the ability to make a floating city in the sky so I’m convinced about the door but why is he said to have caused the decline of the Dwarf Kingdom?

I was curious about what Sir Rainstar did so I asked.

It’s a story from more than 300 years in the past anyway.

“Did Sir Rainstar do something to the Dwarf Kingdom?”

“ ... Firstly, the place where Rockford stands was originally a mine. To defeat a heinous monster there, the magic Sir Rainstar released disintegrated the mine. At that time, the dwarves feared that they would be killed if they opposed him.”

... Although there’s the fake town, if it is a location where Sir Rainstar gouged a mountain, I can understand why the dwarves were frightened.

“ ... I understand that Sir Rainstar is a tremendous person but something of that extent won’t cause a decline right?”

“After that, Sir Rainstar came to the Dwarf Kingdom and announced that he wished to form technology cooperation to create new items, by taking up the business segment where dwarves were bad at, he intended to spread the technology of the Dwarf Kingdom.”

“I see. Manufacturing has been your specialty since the past but hospitality ... doesn’t seem present even today.”

“Then, Rainstar built Rockford and it became filled with vibrancy but Rockford gathered many researchers and developers, the dwarf race was no exception.”

“ ... The decline was due to the outflow of engineers?”

“ ... Unfortunately, in the literature records, it's stated that the only dwarves left in this country were the insular dwarves. That is the reason why dwarves are so unsociable. Well then, please make your choice.”

“Dolan, anything is fine. Choose for yourself.”

Dolan nodded and entered the treasury.

Then, he immediately stiffened and turned his gaze to here ... or toward King Rockwell to be exact.

“Why, why is this here!”

“Because even if it was a failure, I felt that it still possess potential.”

King Rockwell nonchalantly answered Dolan's muffled voice of anger.

Dolan took a single sword from the treasury.

Even though it was a single-handed sword, it was on the large side.

“Luciel-sama, is it alright ... if I take this from the treasury?”

“ ... Judging from the contents of the conversation, that is the sword that you forged that time you became a slave?”

“ ... Yes.”

“I see ... that ... if you can promise me that you will not be dragged down by your past, you can take that from the treasury. King Rockwell, is it alright if we receive that?”

“It is uncle's request. There's no reason for me to reject.”

“Thank you.”

I gave my permission and King Rockwell also smoothly gave his permission.

Previously, Grand-san mentioned that King Rockwell regretted converting Dolan and Paula into slaves.

Therefore, he carefully kept the failed sword in the treasury.

Wanting to change the mood slightly, I asked to meet with the former slaves including Estia.

“Well then, could you guide me to where the former slaves and Estia are?”

“Among the former slaves, there are those who are working as well as those who are guilty of crimes and have been confined though?”

What were they thinking to commit a crime in just 10 days?

“What were the crimes they committed?”

“Injuring people with magic and stealing other people’s property.”

“Even though they had pledged, aren’t they foolish to still commit crimes ... for now, I’ll listen to their story and if there is no saving them by talking, could I entrust them to you for the Dwarf Kingdom to deal with based on the law?”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah, they would have died if I didn’t release them from slavery. Which was why I saved them but I did not save their lives to allow them to commit crimes. Sorry but could I meet those who are guilty?”

“Understood. Then, follow me please.”

After closing the treasury door, King Rockwell began moving.

After I kept the sword Dolan took out from the treasury into my magic bag, we followed after King Rockwell.

At the audience hall, Aresurei was still asleep so King Rockwell grabbed him and we left the audience hall.

Immediately after walking down the corridor, we met with the dwarf attendants and King Rockwell entrusted Aresurei to them before opening the door next to the slave room. There was a staircase leading underground there.

“It’s here. It’s slightly smelly so please endure it.”

“I could purify it?”

“It’s not smelly by choice so if you can make the smell go away then thank you.”

“Alright.”

I descended down the steps while casting purification.

King Rockwell was walking ahead with Lionel following behind him and I had Cathy and Kefin to either side of me.

I don't know why we formed ranks without noticing but I was convinced that my retinue was excellent and as I continued applying purification, we came upon the cells.

I spoke to Dolan.

"The prison here sure look similar to the ones made in Ienith."

"It's the same thing. Prisons are made to be sturdy. Prisons made by Paula are formed from magic tools and they are applied with magic seals that have the effect of lowering and causing the decline of the body's ability. But, these here are the original."

"I see."

I was glad that Dolan completely returned to normal by being able to interpose a small boast about Paula to me.

As we had that conversation, we finally reached the prison that held the criminals who committed crimes.

Looking at their faces, I noted that Estia was not there.

The ones there were those that were originally criminal slaves.

"Is the recidivism rate high here?" *(TL: Recidivism refers to a person's relapse into criminal behavior)*

While muttering that, I spoke to them individually to be safe but after making them pledge to not distort the facts, faced with the punishment of plunging into the ant's nest if they lied, they chose to remain silent.

They will most likely become slaves to the Dwarf Kingdom.

"Sorry for consuming your time. I will entrust them to King Rockwell. I would like to meet with the former slaves who did not commit any crimes next."

"The criminals will be dropped into slavery though, are you alright with that?"

“Yeah. Even though I saved their lives, since they immediately returned to committing crimes within just 10 days ... currently, I completely do not have the ability to save them.”

While thinking that their future might have changed if I showed them a new path, I pondered ... if a day would come where I would be able to judge people.

Upon opening the door to the former slave resting area, there were 8 former slaves there.

“Former slaves, I apologize for the abruptness but please choose whether to continue working in the Dwarf Kingdom or to accompany us to the Holy City. After reaching the Holy City, I would not protect you but I will hand you 20 silver coins from the previous subjugation fee and relief fund I received. However, I will not provide any further assistance. I do not know what work there is in the Dwarf Kingdom but the contents of the past 10 days you all had would be your work.”

“Please bring me along.”

One person raised their hand and the number rapidly increased until 6 of the 8 people chose to travel to the Holy City.

“Then for the remaining 2, I believe King Rockwell will be responsible for providing you with your food and such so be at ease.”

I announced so while looking at King Rockwell and he nodded his agreement with a wry smile.

After that, the figures of Estia, the former slave healers, and the other former slaves appeared.

It seemed like they were told that I came together with Dolan and they all had smiles on their faces for some reason despite their light shortness of breath.

Then, I once again told them the conditions I mentioned earlier.

“Including Estia, there is a need to listen to the circumstances that lead to you 4 healers becoming slaves so I will have to forcibly bring you to the headquarters for the time being. Well then, what about the others?”

Surprisingly, half of the former slaves, 5 of them, raised their hands to continue working in the Dwarf Kingdom.

“King Rockwell, we may be former slaves but please treat us well.”

“Understood. I will treat you the same way I treat the dwarves.”

Then, Dolan spoke to King Rockwell.

“King Rockwell. For a long period of time, the Dwarf Kingdom has not mingled with the outside world. If you are considering interaction with the outside world, it may be good to do so with Ienith or the Saint Schull Allied Nations that Luciel-sama belongs to.”

“Uncle Dolan ... Luciel-dono, can I request that you be the middleman when that time comes?”

“As long as you swear to not correspond with arrogance.”

“That’s harsh.”

We peacefully finished fulfilling all our promises.

“I’ll bring along great alcohol the next time I come so please be properly hospitable then okay.”

“If your gift is firewater then I would gladly entertain you.”

I exchanged a firm handshake with King Rockwell and even despite the commotion this time around, I promised to visit the Dwarf Kingdom once again and departed together with the former slaves towards the Holy City.

CHAPTER 124

RETURN TO THE HOLY CAPITAL

We were advancing quickly along the road to the Holy City/Holy Capital after leaving the Dwarf Kingdom.

I told Estia that instead of listening to the main points, I intend to listen to the whole story after reaching the Holy Capital.

Estia spent 10 days in the Dwarf Kingdom but since Lionel and the others did not forget Estia's face or name, we could not confirm the conjecture that the Darkness Spirits had manipulated their memories.

"Thank you for the letter. Once I passed it to the Dwarf King, I had ensured safety and was provided food without any suspicion placed onto me."

She gratefully conveyed that with a smile.

During our breaks while on our journey ... we gathered the former slaves and we talked about various things.

While asking about their family structure, their favourite cooking, and the entry condition for the Magician's Guild, I obtained new knowledge and I asked about the chants that I most likely could already use.

" ... Why?"

Even though I have the magic aptitude for fire attribute, water attribute and earth attribute, the magic did not invoke even when I chant the Lv I magic.

Well, I had predicted that.

Similar to that time I learn Heal, my proficiency did not rise just by chanting. *(TL: Need to chant, have a mental image, manipulate magical power and then cast the magic for the magic to be successful and the proficiency to rise)*

" ... Can't extract magical power? ... Proficiency doesn't rise? Why?"

While desperately trying to endure the rising fear of the proficiency not rising by even 1 point, I continued the journey. *(TL: Looks like Luciel still won't be obtaining his all attribute magic cheat)*

"The Saint Schull Allied Nations sure is safe."

"So enviable nya."

"Suitable amounts of monsters inhabit the area for food and it's also good that the country is surrounded by forests filled with wild grasses and mountains."

I somehow have a sense of deja vu from that conversation.

As I had that thought while proceeding down the path, I voiced my thoughts.

"Why weren't there any villages around Rockford and the Dwarf Kingdom?"

"It goes without saying for cities but even for villages, permission from the country's representative ... it would be the Pope in this Saint Schull Allied Nations, would be required."

"It's because of the problems of such rights that people can't build them as they please nya."

"What about the Empire that Lionel and Cathy were in?"

Lionel and Cathy seemed like they were knowledgeable with regard to the autonomy of the Empire so I tried asking.

"The Emperor and the Duke houses control the entirety of the Empire. The Marquis and Earl houses operate their respective territories while the factions of the Viscount and Baron houses manage the fine details of the territory."

"In actuality, due to rapid expansion/development, the current situation is that they can't manage the country nya."

"The Empire is rapidly ensnaring people like Lionel-sama with high aspirations in traps nya."

The 2 of them lamented over the current Empire.

I knew that the interior of the Empire was rotten but I had not imagined that it was to such an extent.

“A time may come that you would have to tour the Empire but it seems wise to stay away for the time being.”

“Lionel, don’t say such scary things lightly ... it’s true that there are no plans to travel to the Empire for the time being but to think that there would be so many secret manoeuvres behind the scenes, I might indeed have to think of a few hands to cope with it.”

I can only see it as the Empire having an excellent strategist that is spreading around a ruse showing that their interior is rotten.

Since I don’t even know the state of affairs in the first place, it would be hard for me to know everything but I only wish to quietly live my life regardless of the country I’m in.

During sunset, I was conversing with Lionel and the others as we prepared our camp when Estia showed her face.

“Luciel-sama, could I help with anything?”

“No, it’s alright. Putting that aside, how’s the situation within the carriage.”

“Because of its unimaginable wideness contrary to the external appearance and the virtual lack of swaying, my body isn’t sore at all.”

“I see, that’s great then.”

I ended the conversation like that but Estia didn’t look like she was about to leave.

“Is there anything else?”

“ ... Erm, regarding the horse Luciel-sama rides ...”

“Why are you bringing up Fornoir here?”

Even though it’s a continuation of the conversation, I found it hard to understand the jump in topic when it seemed like Estia once again resolved herself and began talking.

“I sense an incredible power from that horse. Where did you get it?”

“Fornoir is a very excellent and friendly horse. Among the horses ridden by the Paladins, Fornoir was the only one that allowed me to properly ride her so I unreasonably asked Pope-sama to give her to me. Is there something that bothers you?”

“ ... For some reason unknown to me, since the time that horse looked at me, I’ve not felt uneasy or rather, I feel like the feeling of loneliness has faded ...”

“I won’t cede Fornoir even if you ask okay. Partly because Pope-sama has entrusted her to me but more importantly, she is my partner.”

After I said that with a smile, I heard muffled laughter from behind me but it was something I wanted to say even if I’m laughed at so it didn’t bother me.

“I understand. Sorry for asking for the impossible. Also, what would happen to me after my hearing at the Holy Capital ends?”

“If you properly answer the questions regarding the kind of job a Spirit Magic Swordsman is and how you came about becoming a member of the Healer’s Guild as well as fully convey the circumstances that led to you becoming a slave, I believe it will be alright.”

“I see. Will Luciel-sama and everyone else stand witness?”

“That is up to the decision of Pope-sama. If nothing comes up, we have a town that we wish to travel to so we would be heading that way.”

“I see. Understood. I’ll tell that to everyone else.”

Estia returned to the circle of former slaves.

“I could see her anxiety.”

“ ... Even though I’ve dispelled her slave contract, since she was brought up in the Empire, would it be possible for her to do something suspicious due to having had taken a pledge?”

“I can’t give you an affirmation nya. At the very least, there weren’t any who had taken pledges among Lionel-sama’s entourage nya.”

With Cathy’s input, I looked toward Lionel’s direction and asked him.

“Lionel was targeted by your subordinates after you investigated the case on human experimentations and slaves right?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know of any facilities that served to nurture weak-bodies children from young like Estia?”

“Just like how generals cannot fully grasp everything about their men, the Empire is not a monolithic state.

Not to mention the nobles, aiming for territories to enlarge their own, they direct bandits to the area and cause it to fall into a den of thieves.

The work to obtain intelligence on who does what is something unusual.”

“They sure held that together well to be able to go to war.”

“During the time of war, if you can convert the land into gold and pay it to the government, the Emperor will recognize and confer peerage rank up to Earl rank. It is equivalent to being resourceful without having valour. Even the commoners have a chance to obtain peerage.”

“ ... The same thing happened in Ienith and in the Dwarf Kingdom, are the resourceful houses the ones starting all the turmoil?”

“No doubt.”

“ ... Have information about me already been exposed?”

“I would think so. However, as I mentioned previously, I don’t think any of them will attack openly.”

“If that’s the case then naturally the fact that Lionel and Cathy are with me has also been exposed right?”

“Yeah. As long as we remain as slaves and accompany you, we won’t need to worry about reckless attacks in fear of your retaliation.”

I understood the fundamental reason why I could not release Lionel and the other’s slave contracts until the problem with the Empire is resolved.

While thinking that I have apparently earned some confidence from Lionel and the others, I finished making dinner.

The next day, after telling them that there’s only a single day left before we arrive at the Holy Capital, I strictly ordered them to register as adventurers.

Since identification can’t be made without it.

I decided to entrust them to my cooking mentor Graz-san. *(TL: Graz is the guildmaster of the Adventurer’s Guild in the Holy Capital)*

“Once we depart from the Holy Capital, I’ll finally be able to have another bout with Whirlwind.”

“Yeah. We might have to spend a few days in the Holy Capital but we will be going to Meratoni without a doubt. I wish to take the opportunity to re-examine myself slightly.”

“I’d also like to try fighting nya.”

“Shisho is as much of a battle maniac as Lionel so I believe he would come to fight even if you leave him alone. Of course, that includes Kefin too. I believe Garba-san would have returned by the time we arrive at Meratoni.”

“ ... I’ll do my best to not die.”

“Was Garba-san’s gruelling training that bad?”

“ ... I saw the revolving lanterns multiple times.”

“What, that’s normal. Every day was like that when I was in Meratoni.”

“Eh?”

“I see. So that’s why ...”

“It’s not that you’re insensitive to pain, something like that is ordinary for you huh nya.”

They all showed various reactions to my words but I smoothly let it all pass.

“There are many pro-human race doctrines in the Saint Schull Church.

If Cathy and Kefin fall into any set ups, it’s alright to fire back.

Absolutely do not lose.

If you’re told something and it can’t be resolved by saying that you’re my retainer, you can also remain on standby and spend time outside the church at the Adventurer’s Guild.”

“Would it be alright in the Adventurer’s Guild nya?”

“Aren’t there a lot of human races among adventurers too?”

“I don’t think that much would have changed in just a single year but I don’t think anything that severe will happen so it will somehow work out.”

“I understand about the 2 of them but how about me?”

“I might have Lionel train with the Paladin Corps.”

“I think that will be great.”

“It’s unfair if it’s only Lionel-sama nya.”

“I wish to gather information at the Adventurer’s Guild for the time being.”

“I’ll entrust that to you Cathy as well for a while.”

“It can’t be helped then nya.”

It would be great if the former slaves move normally but since I have no way of knowing what would happen, I requested for them to be monitored.

Thus as our various conversations progressed, around the time the sky dyed red, I finally returned to the Holy Capital after little over a year.

